MAKING IN ORDER AT ANY TIME CONSIDERATION OF H. CON. RES. 30, DIRECTING THE PRESIDENT, PURSUANT TO SECTION 5(C) OF THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION, TO REMOVE ALL UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES, OTHER THAN UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES ASSIGNED TO PROTECT THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY, FROM SOMALIA

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order at any time on April 27, 2023, to consider H. Con. Res. 30 in the House if called up by the chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, or his designee; that the concurrent resolution be considered as read; that the previous question be considered as ordered on the concurrent resolution to adoption without intervening motion, except for 80 minutes of debate with 20 minutes controlled by Representative MCCAUL of Texas, 20 minutes controlled by Representative MEEKS of New York, and 40 minutes controlled by Representative GAETZ of Florida, or their respective designees.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2811, LIMIT, SAVE, GROW ACT OF 2023, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 39, DISAPPROVING THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE RELATING TO ‘‘PROCEDURES COVERING SUSPENSION OF LIQUIDATION, DUTIES AND ESTIMATED DUTIES IN ACCORD WITH PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION 10414’’

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 327 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 327

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 2811) to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) two hours of debate equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Budget or their respective designees and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 39) disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Commerce relating to ‘‘Procedures Covering Suspension of Liquidation, Duties and Estimated Duties in Accord With Presidential Proclamation 10414’’. All points of order against consideration of the joint resolution are waived. The joint resolution shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the joint resolution are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means or their respective designees; and (2) one motion to recommit.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 1 hour.

□ 1215

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, for purposes of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), the distinguished ranking member of the Rules Committee, pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, during consideration of this resolution, all time is yielded for the purposes of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on House Resolution 327.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oklahoma?

There was no objection.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, last night, the Rules Committee met and met and met and reported out a rule providing for the consideration of H.R. 2811, the Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023, and H.J. Res. 39, a joint resolution of disapproval that ends President Biden's rule protecting Chinese solar manufacturers that are illegally violating U.S. trade law.

The rule provides for consideration of H.R. 2811 under a closed rule. It provides 2 hours of general debate and one motion to recommit. The rule also provides for consideration of H.J. Res. 39 under a closed rule with 1 hour of general debate and one motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, the United States Government hit our statutory debt limit of $31.3 trillion. That is an astonishing number. It is over 120 percent of our annual gross domestic product.

This level of spending is simply unsustainable, and the American people know it. Three out of every four Americans support taking action on the national debt. They know that if we do nothing and keep moving forward as we have been doing, the result will be leaving a huge burden for our children and grandchildren; a pile of debt, a weak economy, and a broken currency.

You would think, given all that, the staggering reality, that President Biden and congressional Democrats would acknowledge the need to do something to address this problem. You would think they would be open to doing what we have done many, many times in the past: to couple needed fiscal reforms with an agreement to lift the debt ceiling. You would even think that President Biden, who himself personally negotiated several debt ceiling increases over the years, would be willing to sit down with us and talk.

Instead, we have heard none of this. No, we will not negotiate with you. No, we will not talk about the Federal budget. No, we won't look at commonsense reforms. No. No. No.

Instead, President Biden and congressional Democrats insist it is their way or the highway. There will be no reforms, no changes to Federal spending, not even clawing back the unspent pandemic relief funds that are no longer necessary.

With the passage of the Limit, Save, Grow Act, the House will stand with the American people who desperately want us to fix our national debt problem. That fix starts here in today's bill.

Mr. Speaker, our second item for today, H.J. Res. 39, is a joint resolution of disapproval of a Biden administration rule that would suspend import duties on solar panels made with components from the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Speaker, Communist China does not play by the same rules as the rest of the world. Chinese leadership will do whatever it takes to advance the Chinese Communist Party's interest to the detriment of the American economy.

China has been unfairly subsidizing the production of solar cells and modules and dumping them on the U.S. market at below cost. It should come as no surprise that China is also attempting to get around the existing import duties by routing their subsidized solar components through four countries: Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Instead of holding them accountable for their actions, President Biden suspended the penalties for 2 years, presumably to appease climate activists who have no interest in America's job creators and manufacturers. If the House does not act, China's bad behavior will go unchallenged, and American solar manufacturers will continue to get a raw deal.

Mr. Speaker, we must stand up to Communist China. We must call out their inappropriate behavior on the global stage. When it is called for, we must protect American manufacturers against unfair competition. H.J. Res. 39 will accomplish all of these goals and will do so in a bipartisan manner.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this rule and the underlying legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), my good friend, for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let's begin. We are dealing with this default on America bill. It is a doozy, even by the measurements that we judge this current majority in Congress. How did we get here?

I will tell you how we got here. The process is lousy. It stinks. We heard promise after promise after promise about how great Republicans would be when they were in charge; about how open and transparent and fair things would be here. It is clear now that it was all a bunch of talk, all phony. They never meant any of it.

There was no hearing, no markup, no amendments, no nothing. The CBO score came out 5 minutes before the hearing started. The manager's amendment released at 12:45 a.m. The Rules Committee met for 6 hours and then we adjourned until 11:30 p.m. Democrats sat waiting in an empty room for 45 minutes.

We were told to come back at 1:45 in the morning.

In the midnight seance that the Republicans conducted in the chairman's office, out comes this new language that is supposed to satisfy the extreme rightwing of the extreme rightwing.

Basically, some of my Republican colleagues had an objection that the bill didn't screw people fast enough. Get this, after all their talk about how horrible the Inflation Reduction Act was, we find out that some of their Members actually love parts of the Inflation Reduction Act and demanded that we protect it, even if it meant changing the bill at 2 a.m. in the morning.

Let me tell everyone else, in case you missed it—because some people go to sleep before 2 a.m.—this all happened at 2 a.m. Shhh. Secret.

Speaker MCCARTHY said himself that you just can't throw something on the floor. Those were his words. But here we are and this bill is being thrown on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, 25 of the 32 rules this Congress has done have been completely closed. The Rules Committee has allowed to the floor only 91 amendments so far. When I was in charge, at this point we had allowed to the floor 199 amendments.

Mr. Speaker, 92 percent of all Democratic amendments have not been allowed to be debated. Republican Whip TOM EMMER told us yesterday that the bill was closed. It is not getting changed, he said. And then what did they do just a few hours later? They changed it.

Mr. Speaker, I asked Chairman SMITH last night in the Rules Committee if he liked the way this bill was being brought up. You know what he said to me?

I am not in charge.

Well, it is his committee. Who is in charge of whether or not they hold a hearing or a markup?

Just as a lesson for our new Members who demanded more regular order, this is not it. I would like a single Republican to come down here and defend the process that was used here. I bet they won't because they cannot.

Here we are debating this bill, the default on America act. We are happy to have a conversation on our spending priorities. Absolutely. We welcome that conversation. This isn't a conversation. They handed us a ransom note.

They say that in order to agree to pay our bills for 1 year, we have to make 10 years of deep cuts that will hurt our constituents. This is a ransom note. Then what happens a year from now? What is next? Do you want our first-born children in exchange for paying the bills on time?

Republicans have said that unless we screw regular people, working people, veterans, the environment—I could go right down the list—unless we do that, Republicans are going to push this economy off a cliff, damaging our credit rating, crashing Wall Street, resulting in all kinds of job loss, and putting us into a recession. That is the choice they are giving us here today.

Here is the deal, and this is what is really galling. Republicans are telling us that in order to get our fiscal house in order so we can pay our bills, not a single dollar can be saved at the Pentagon, that billionaires can't pay another cent in taxes. To get our fiscal house in order, we need to nickel-and-dime moms and dads, workers and veterans, and regular people.

Billionaires and CEOs received trillions in tax cuts when Republicans were in charge. Trillions. They want to screw the people that I came to Congress to represent—it takes my breath away, Mr. Speaker—regular people, working people, the farmers, and the veterans. They want to kick people off healthcare. They want to cut funding to stop drugs from coming into America. They want to fire teachers, and they want to take food away from women, infants, and children. What is wrong with them, Mr. Speaker?

I know my friend, Chairman COLE—and he is my friend—cares deeply about programs like Head Start. In his own State, this bill would cut 3,300 children off of Head Start. These are real kids for God's sake. Don't take my word for it. The National Head Start program says:

> Make no mistake, the current debt limit and budget legislation under consideration in the House of Representatives will cause irreparable damage to Head Start.

It is not mathematically possible to make the cuts that they are talking about without hurting our own constituents. All this so that we can appease the extreme MAGA wing of the Republican Party.

The contempt that so many on the other side of the aisle have for people who are poor, who are struggling, who are working hard but having trouble making ends meet because the other side won't even raise the minimum wage, it is stunning.

Mr. Speaker, we have a bill loaded up with all these new work requirements and hurdles for people to jump through. It will result in people losing SNAP, losing Meals on Wheels benefits, losing assistance to pay for infants and children. Yet, there has not been a single hearing on this topic. Not one.

Mr. Speaker, I asked: Who are these people in real life that you claim don't work who are on SNAP? Who are the people you are talking about?

The chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and the chairman of the Budget Committee gave me a blank stare. I asked: What is the average SNAP benefit? That is a pretty basic question if you feel strongly about this program. They had no idea. Not a clue. Not even a guess.

Mr. Speaker, I asked: What is the average length that someone is on SNAP? They had no idea. This is not about substance or reality, Mr. Speaker.

By the way, the average SNAP benefit per person per meal is about $2. The average time somebody is on the benefit is less than a year. This is not about substance or reality.

The bottom line is if this is what the American people want, as the Republicans say—many of them kept saying it over and over in the Rules Committee, which I could not believe because I think most people in this country are horrified about what they are trying to do here—if they think that is what the American people want, then they should win the White House and win the Senate.

They were supposed to win the House by a huge margin, but that red wave turned into a pink splash. I don't think you are going to be around in the leadership here much longer, quite frankly.

□ 1230

Enough is enough, Mr. Speaker. America pays our bills. This is a ransom note.

Republicans want to default on America, and all Democrats are asking for is that you listen to Trump. You know him. He is the guy you are all afraid of. He said: ''I can't imagine anybody ever even thinking of using the debt ceiling as a negotiation wedge. . . . That is a very, very sacred thing. . . . We could never play with it.''

That is the guy whom you are all afraid of. That is what he said.

Listen to Speaker MCCARTHY in 2015: ''When the United States makes promises, it keeps them, which is why the House voted today to avoid the threat of a debt default.''

That was Speaker MCCARTHY. I guess he forgot.

This is a simple, routine part of doing our job, something all of us should be able to get behind.

If you want to have a conversation about spending priorities, that is the appropriations process or the budget process, but it is not holding our Nation hostage. It is not a ransom note.

Don't default on America, Speaker MCCARTHY. Do your job. Do what you said we would do: keep America's promises. Don't mess around with the full faith and credit of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, I urge a ''no'' vote on this rule and a ''no'' vote on the underlying legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I have great respect for my friend, Mr. MCGOVERN, but, of course, most of the things he mentioned simply aren't in the bill.

What really happened last night is that we have been trying to get you guys to negotiate for weeks and for months. We are going to raise the debt ceiling, something we said we were going to do and do in the legislation, and here is our opening offer.

Where is yours? We don't have one. We don't have one from the President. We have a Democratic Senate that can't produce one. So, we are going to put the ball over and see what you guys are actually going to do with it.

I remind my friends on the other side of the aisle that the work requirements we are including in this legislation are, in fact, less strict than the ones that then-Senator Biden supported in the 1990s. We should be helping people attain self-sufficiency as opposed to having them simply depend on the Federal Government.

That doesn't seem like a radical idea. That seems like common sense to me, and I think most Americans anyplace in the country would support it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. ROY), who is my very good friend and a member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. ROY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oklahoma for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I never know who I am, whether I am a rightwing MAGA extremist or a Ron DeSantis-supporting RINO. Today, where I am here on the floor is—I would just say this: ''I cannot agree to vote for a full increase in the debt without any assurance that steps will be taken . . . to reduce the alarming increase in the deficits and the debt.'' Those aren't my words. Those were Joe Biden's words in October 1984, when the debt was $1.5 trillion.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle are hiding. They want to hide behind process. What they don't want the American people to know is that this bill has been available since last Wednesday; that of the 20 debt ceiling increases since 2000, only two have gone through committee; that H.R. 1 in this bill went through regular order and passed off the floor; that the REINS Act, which is in this bill in its existing form, passed this very body on a bipartisan basis in 2017; that the spending repeals that we have in this bill are clean cuts, cutting the very things that this body with Democrat control passed with 158 proxy votes in August, calling people back and forcing some of us to have to fly back with the kind of process that we learned to expect under Speaker PELOSI.

Instead, here, what did we have last night? Yes, we had an agreement late at night. Do you know what that agreement was, Mr. Speaker? It was a recognition of the deal that had already been constructed, which was to say we are going to repeal the god-awful IRA subsidies destroying our economy, which are absolutely going to enrich a handful of corporate America, pushing their green subsidies, enriching themselves, and destroying the American economy and energy freedom.

That is what we are doing: restoring exactly what agreement had been reached that we had decided last week.

The simple fact is that the American people don't really care what my Democratic colleagues have to say because it is more of the same scare tactics.

They want to say that we are cutting spending to oblivion, yet the reality is what we are dealing with, Mr. Speaker, is if you kept the fiscal year 2023 defense level spending—last year's defense spending—and add to it the nondefense level of that MAGA extremist Barack Obama that he proposed in his last budget for fiscal year 2024, then you get exactly the $1.471 trillion level we are proposing. That is the truth.

Proposing pre-COVID nondefense level spending; proposing a defense to match China; proposing the kind of cuts the American people expect us to do in upfront first-year cuts, to cut student loans that are unfair to the plumber and making sure that they are biased toward kids who rack up debt; we are going to make sure that we are increasing our economic productivity by getting rid of the regulatory stranglehold with the regulations that are in the IRA regulations; and then we are going to make sure that we get rid of the COVID spending to $50 billion of unobligated dollars, in addition to making sure that the American people can carry out their business without constraint from government—in short, we are going to shrink Washington and grow America.

The American people are tired of the same. They want us to do our job. They are tired of CHUCK SCHUMER and President Biden doing absolutely nothing.

Republicans in the House are doing our job, and we are going to send this over to the Senate.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a report by The Balance titled: ''President Trump's Impact on the National Debt.''

[From the balance, Jan. 26, 2022]

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S IMPACT ON THE NATIONAL DEBT

(By Kimberly Amadeo)

The national debt increased by almost 36 percent during Trump's tenure.

Republican candidate Donald Trump promised during the 2016 presidential campaign that he would eliminate the nation's debt in eight years.

Instead, his budget estimates showed that he would actually add at least $8.3 trillion, increasing the U.S. debt to $28.5 trillion by 2025. But the national debt reached that figure much sooner. The national debt stood at $19.9 trillion when President Trump took office in January 2017, and it reached a high of $27 trillion in October 2020.

The national debt reached another high of $28 trillion less than two months after President Trump left office. In December 2021, Congress then increased the debt limit by $2.5 trillion, to almost $31.4 trillion, as debt rose again under President Joe Biden.

HOW DID THE NATIONAL DEBT INCREASE?

At first it seemed that Trump was lowering the debt. It fell $102 billion in the first six months after he took office. The debt was $19.9 trillion on Jan. 20, the day Trump was inaugurated. It was $19.8 trillion on July 30, thanks to the federal debt ceiling.

Trump signed a bill increasing the debt ceiling on Sept. 8, 2017. The debt exceeded $20 trillion for the first time in U.S. history later that day. Trump signed a bill on Feb. 9, 2018, suspending the debt ceiling until March 1, 2019. The total national debt was at $22 trillion by February 2019. Trump again suspended the debt ceiling in July 2019 until after the 2020 presidential election.

The debt hit a record $27 trillion on Oct. 1, 2020 before reaching further peaks in 2021 that caused Congress to act again to raise the debt limit in December.

Trump oversaw the fastest increase in the debt of any president, almost 36 percent from 2017 to 2020.

DID PRESIDENT TRUMP REDUCE THE NATIONAL DEBT?

Trump promised two strategies to reduce U.S. debt before taking office: He would increase growth by 4 percent to 6 percent, and he would eliminate wasteful federal spending.

INCREASING GROWTH

Trump promised while on the campaign trail to grow the economy by 4 percent to 6 percent annually to increase tax revenues. Once in office, he lowered his growth estimates to between 2 percent and 3 percent. These more realistic projections are within the 2 percent to 3 percent healthy growth rate.

President Trump also promised to achieve between 2 percent and 4 percent growth with tax cuts. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act cut the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent beginning in 2018. The top individual income tax rate dropped to 37 percent. The TCJA doubled the standard deduction and eliminated personal exemptions. The corporate cuts are permanent, but the individual changes expire at the end of 2025.

According to the Laffer curve, tax cuts only stimulate the economy enough to make up for lost revenue when the rates are above 50 percent . It worked during the Reagan administration because the highest tax rate was 70 percent at that time.

ELIMINATING WASTEFUL FEDERAL SPENDING

Trump's second strategy was to eliminate waste and redundancy in federal spending. He demonstrated this cost-consciousness during his campaign when he used his Twitter account and rallies instead of expensive television ads.

Trump was right that there is waste in federal spending. The problem isn't finding it. The problem is in cutting it. Each program has a constituency that lobbies Congress. Eliminating these benefits may lose voters and contributors. Congressional representatives may agree to cut spending in someone else's district, but they resist doing so on their own.

More than two-thirds of government spending goes to mandatory obligations made by previous acts of Congress. Social Security benefits cost $1.2 trillion in Fiscal Year 2021. Medicare cost $722 billion, and Medicaid cost $448 billion. The interest on the debt was $378 billion.

Military spending must also be cut to lower the debt because it's such a large portion of the budget. But Trump increased military spending in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 to $933 billion. That includes three components:

$636 billion base budget for the Department of Defense

$69 billion in overseas contingency operations for DoD to fight the Islamic State group

$229 billion to fund the other agencies that protect our nation, including the Department of Veterans Affairs ($105 billion), Homeland Security ($50 billion), the State Department ($44 billion), the National Nuclear Security Administration in the Department of Energy ($20 billion), and the FBI and Cybersecurity for the eDepartment of Justice ($10 billion)

Only $595 billion was left to pay for everything else budgeted for FY 2021 after mandatory and military spending. That includes agencies that process Social Security and other benefits. It also includes the necessary functions performed by the Department of Justice and the Internal Revenue Service. We'd have to eliminate it all to make a dent in the $966 billion deficit.

You can't reduce the deficit or debt without major cuts to defense and mandated benefits programs. Cutting waste isn't enough.

DID TRUMP'S BUSINESS DEBT AFFECT HIS APPROACH TO U.S. DEBT?

Trump said in an interview with CNBC during his 2016 campaign that he would ''borrow, knowing that if the economy crashed, you could make a deal.'' But sovereign debt is different from personal debt. It can't be handled the same way.

A 2016 Fortune magazine analysis revealed Trump's business was $1.11 billion in debt. That includes $846 million owed on five properties. These include Trump Tower, 40 Wall Street, and 1290 Avenue of the Americas in New York. It also includes the Trump Hotel in Washington, D.C., and 555 California Street in San Francisco. But the income generated by these properties easily pays their annual interest payment. Trump's debt is reasonable in the business world.

The U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio was 129 percent at the end of 2020. That's the $27.8 trillion U.S. debt as of December 2020, divided by the $21.5 trillion nominal GDP at the end of the second quarter this year.

The World Bank compares countries based on their total debt-to-gross domestic product ratio. It considers a country to be in trouble if that ratio is greater than 77 percent.

The high U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio didn't discourage investors. America is one of the safest economies in the world and its currency is the world's reserve currency. Investors purchase U.S. Treasurys in a flight to safety even during a U.S. economic crisis. That's one reason why interest rates plunged to historical lows in March 2020 after the coronavirus outbreak. Those falling interest rates meant that America's debt could increase, but interest payments remain stable.

The U.S. also has a massive fixed pension expense and health insurance costs. A business can renege on these benefits, ask for bankruptcy, and weather the resulting lawsuits, but a president and Congress can't cut back those costs without losing their jobs at the next election. As such, Trump's experience in handling business debt did not transfer to managing the U.S. debt.

HOW THE NATIONAL DEBT AFFECTS YOU

The national debt doesn't affect you directly until it reaches the tipping point. It slows economic growth once the debt-to-GDP ratio exceeds 77 percent, for an extended period of time. Every percentage point of debt above this level costs the country 0.017 percentage points in economic growth, according to a World Bank analysis.

The first sign of trouble is when interest rates start to rise significantly. Investors need a higher return to offset the greater perceived risk. They start to doubt that the debt can be paid off.

The second sign is that the U.S. dollar loses value. You will notice that as inflation rises, imported goods cost more. Gas and grocery prices rise. Travel to other countries also becomes much more expensive.

The cost of providing benefits and paying the interest on the debt will skyrocket as interest rates and inflation rise. That leaves less money for other services. The government will be forced to cut services or raise taxes at that point. This will further slow economic growth. Continued deficit spending will no longer work at that point.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, talk about spending. The national debt increased by almost 36 percent from 2017 to 2020 during Trump's tenure.

I say to the gentleman who just spoke—a lot of yelling here. The last time I heard that kind of tone was when he was yelling about the need to have more regular order here. I guess he has forgotten about that. Just because the gentleman yells doesn't mean he is right.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from the State of Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL).

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this rule to advance this cruel, extreme, and unworkable default on America act that will throw us into a recession, that will crash our economy, and that will throw 1.7 million women and children off of nutrition assistance and seniors off of Medicare.

It is hypocrisy for my Republican colleagues to say that they somehow suddenly care about the debt when they passed the 2017 tax scam that increased the deficit by $2 trillion. Nearly half of those tax cuts went to the top 5 percent, but now, all of a sudden, they care about debt and want to cut nutrition assistance to nearly 3 million women, children, and seniors.

Democrats cut child poverty in half, and we taxed the wealthiest billionaires and corporations to pay their fair share. We are building our economy while MAGA Republicans are threatening to throw us into chaos, and that is on the pocketbooks of regular, working Americans, who are going to suffer if we go into default, if we go into recession, and if we lose millions of jobs.

This is a bad bill. Vote ''no.''

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY), who is a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the rule, which provides consideration of the Limit, Save, Grow Act. It is a bill that is critical to our country's economic future.

President Biden characterized the Limit, Save, Grow Act as ''irresponsible,'' that this commonsense legislation was really asking hardworking Americans, seniors, and children to shoulder an enormous new burden. The only thing irresponsible would be to do nothing.

If we want to talk about a burden on the backs of hardworking Americans, then let's actually talk about it. Let's dig into it.

Let's talk about how folks in my home State of New York had to pay as much as 40 percent more this winter just to heat their homes while the Biden administration halted new pipeline construction and new exploration, and they brought the approval of new oil and gas infrastructure to a standstill.

Let's talk about how seniors in rural communities across my district living on fixed incomes can now afford less in an inflation-ridden economy where the basic cost of goods and groceries has exploded and crushed their budgets.

Let's talk about the $80 billion for the IRS to supply an army of new bureaucrats ready to rain down audit after audit onto middle-class families and small, mom-and-pop business owners.

These are the burdens shouldered by the American people for the trillions of dollars in spending that Democrats have foisted onto their backs and onto the backs of our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, if we care about the future that we would like to leave our children and grandchildren, a future that isn't crushed by debt, inflation, and paying the price for today's excesses, then we should have no problem in supporting this critical step forward.

I strongly support the Limit, Save, Grow Act, a bill that saves hardworking Americans from continuing to shoulder the burden of Democrats' destructive spending policies.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to debunk this talking point that I hear over and over again from my friends. I just heard it right now when we were talking about spending.

Let's remember a couple of things.

First, when Donald Trump was in charge, $8 trillion was added to the national debt. That is a 39-percent increase. It is one-quarter of the entire debt from all of American history. So, please, give me a break.

Second, let's be clear: Inflation is a global problem. Mr. Speaker, if you think that the American Rescue Plan drove up prices in Italy or the U.K., then I have news for you. If you think emergency rescue checks are responsible for inflation in Brazil and Australia, maybe you got your economics degree from Trump University. That is not how things work. Don't take my word for it. Look at the numbers. Actually, look at the research.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Social Security Administration, which states that Republican spending cuts would eliminate field offices, drive up wait times for initial disability and retirement claims processing, lengthen phone wait times, and create backlogs across the board.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION,
THE COMMISSIONER,
Baltimore, MD, March 17, 2023.

Hon. ROSA L. DELAURO,
Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER DELAURO: Thank you for your January 19, 2023 letter asking for information to help Members of Congress understand the impacts of capping fiscal year (FY) 2024 discretionary spending at the FY 2022 enacted level, which would be approximately a six percent cut from our FY 2023 enacted funding. Returning SSA to the FY 2022 funding level or, more drastically, cutting funds by 22 percent from the 2023 enacted level, would greatly harm our ability to serve the public as we are already struggling to recover from the effects of the pandemic.

We are actively using the funding increase we received in FY 2023 to support our hiring efforts to increase staffing as we work to restore sufficient staffing from our lowest staffing levels in over 25 years, particularly in our field offices, teleservice centers, processing centers, and State disability determination services (DDS). Hiring new staff is necessary to improve major workload challenges that affect the public we serve, including people waiting far too long for a disability decision. Funding cuts of the magnitude described above would take us backwards and hurt our customers.

If we return to FY 2022 funding levels in FY 2024, we would:

Close field offices and shorten hours we are open to the public, cutting off vital access to face-to-face service delivery.

Increase the amount of time individuals wait for a decision on their initial disability claim, leading to an average wait time of 9 months, or up to 30 percent longer than today.

Implement a hiring freeze for the agency and the DDS, which means a reduction of over 5,000 employees who are essential to processing retirement claims, making disability decisions, answering the National 800 Number, and issuing new and replacement Social Security cards.

Furlough staff for over 4 weeks and lay off approximately 6,000 employees—producing even longer wait times than customers experience today on our National 800 Number and in our field offices, causing delays to decisions on retirement claims and delays in processing Social Security cards and verification of Social Security Numbers for individuals seeking employment.

Eliminate overtime pay, reducing our ability to keep pace with claims and other service requests.

As noted above, a cut to FY 2022 levels (a six percent cut below current funding) would significantly affect our ability to serve the public and undermine our core mission—producing longer wait times for benefits and to reach SSA representatives, as well as reduced access to in-person service.

Congress expressed an expectation for continued modernization of our IT by providing dedicated funding for this purpose. A six percent reduction would support IT funding only for basic operational requirements and would halt our efforts to improve the customer experience, expand our online services, and enhance our systems to improve employee efficiency. We would have to drastically cut IT at a time when we need it to help mitigate other cuts like office hour reductions, a hiring freeze, and layoffs.

The impacts would be even more significant with deeper cuts. If we are faced with a cut of more than six percent, it would be catastrophic for the agency and for the people depending on Social Security programs supporting their daily needs. For every $100 million below the 6 percent reduction, we would have to lay off an additional 1,000 people, further undermining services to the public. Every 1,000 staff lay off is the equivalent of closing over 40 field offices.

Cuts on this scale would dramatically undermine our ability to function effectively. It would cut in-person access to our field offices, drive up wait times for initial disability and retirement claims processing, lengthen phone wait times, prohibit development of online tools to compensate for the difficulties to reach us by phone and in-person, and create backlogs across the board. It would take years to recover and restore services to levels the public expects.

Millions of Americans depend on Social Security programs to provide income support essential to meeting daily needs, and significant budget cuts prohibit us from providing people with access to vital support. The payments and benefits our programs provide are integral to the economic fabric of our Nation. We appreciate the opportunity to explain the harm a return to FY 2022 funding levels or less would cause for the public we serve, as well as our employees.

Sincerely,
KILOLO KIJAKAZI, PH.D., M.S.W.,
Acting Commissioner.

Mr. McGOVERN. Republicans are trying to make it harder for seniors to access the benefits that they have earned.

Mr. Speaker, I urge that we defeat the previous question. If we do, then I will offer an amendment to the rule to provide for consideration of a resolution that allows the House to state unequivocally that it is our responsibility to defend and preserve Social Security and Medicare for generations to come and reject any cuts to these vital programs.

By the way, these two programs have come under attack by Republican after Republican.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. STANSBURY).

Ms. STANSBURY. Mr. Speaker, I rise as a fierce defender from New Mexico to support this amendment to defend our Social Security and our Medicare.

As our colleagues across the aisle are trying to gut Social Security and Medicare, Democrats are looking for long-term solutions not only to expand these lifesaving programs but to ensure that they are solvent for generations to come.

These programs are lifelines for people in New Mexico. In fact, in New Mexico, we have the highest share of individuals who are on Medicaid by population in the country. That is 873,000 New Mexicans who depend on Medicaid. Our children in New Mexico depend on Medicaid. Over half of our children are on Medicaid.

These programs save lives.

I ask my colleagues: What kind of cruel ransom note are they putting forward that would gut these programs, that would gut programs that feed our children, and that would gut our environmental programs in the name of raising our debt ceiling?

Mr. Speaker, I ask: What is it that we are actually trying to do here today?

That is why I oppose the underlying bill that we are debating today and why I support this amendment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question and to return to the work of the people who elected us.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for a couple of points.

Mr. Speaker, my friend is concerned about the Social Security Act. We have a bill on that, a bill very similar to what President Biden himself voted for when he was in the United States Senate, both the creation of a commission and its final results. I invite my friend to look at it. Perhaps he would join it, and it would be inherently bipartisan.

My friend made the point that inflation is a global phenomenon. I agree. It absolutely is.

Mr. Speaker, if you screw up the greatest economy in the world, then it has global consequences. That is exactly what my friends did.

Don't take my word for it. They were warned by Larry Summers, the Secretary of the Treasury for Bill Clinton, a distinguished economist. They were warned by Steve Rattner, who managed the auto industry under President Obama. They were warned by Jason Furman, who was the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers to President Biden.

If my friends pass something as large as the American Rescue Plan, then we are going to have inflation within a year. We did.

If my friends would listen to their own economists, then we could have avoided this, and we might not have had to take the drastic action we are today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. VAN ORDEN).

□ 1245

Mr. VAN ORDEN. Mr. Speaker, my favorite part of this building is not the rotunda or Statuary Hall or even this Chamber. It is a simple quote painted above a door downstairs. It is, "When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization." It was written by

Daniel Webster in 1840. It is just simply time for some more truth-telling.

It is disingenuous to say publicly that we are ''all of the above'' for American energy if we do not embrace biofuels.

Simultaneously, it is disingenuous to set policy that de facto abolishes petrochemicals and yet admits that we will be dependent on them for at least another decade. Both positions have been made in this Chamber.

I find this to be either duplicitous or foolish, and I choose to be neither.

Our first President, who overlooks this body, was clear about public policy and agriculture. ''It will not be doubted . . . agriculture is of primary importance. In proportion as nations advance in population and other circumstances of maturity this truth becomes more apparent, and renders the cultivation of the soil more and more an object of public patronage.''

This was written 9 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and when Washington says ''more and more'' he acknowledges that agriculture has always been an object of public patronage and must always be.

The initial writing of this bill did not acknowledge that. It did not stand with the farmers, and I will always stand with our farmers.

Early this morning, our Conference made great strides in recognizing our farmers by including elements of my amendment that protect our corn growers and biofuel industries.

With that said, if this final bill as returned from the Senate includes further provisions that do not show the proper respect for our farmers, our national security, or the future of nuclear energy, I will not vote for its passage. There will be no further negotiations from my office.

To be clear, I voted for KEVIN MCCARTHY for Speaker because I believed that he was the person called at this moment to lead this Conference and this body, and I don't feel that my 15 votes were in error. I have full confidence that he will take the opportunity to keep his word to this body and to the American people, and this confidence was earned by his willingness to remove several devastating provisions from this bill.

I remind my friends, as Members of this body, we did not take an oath to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party, we didn't take an oath to the President. We all took the same oath to the Constitution. With this oath came a responsibility to the people that we represent.

In reference to this current discussion on the debt ceiling, our first President articulated this in a manner that for such a young country can only be described as timeless: ''No pecuniary consideration is more urgent than the regular redemption and discharge of the public debt. On none can delay be more injurious or an economy of time more valuable.''

By President Biden refusing to negotiate with this body, he is adding to a growing train of usurpations of the constitutional authority vested in us by the people that sent us here to represent them. This is no more appropriate now than it was when Thomas Jefferson wrote it.

It is our obligation to get Speaker MCCARTHY to the table. It is Speaker MCCARTHY's burden to get the President to a place that can both meet our collective obligations articulated by George Washington and to secure the future for both our progenitors and our progeny.

I will support this bill. I will vote in favor of it, and I encourage all my colleagues to join me in doing so.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume. I am a little confused after the last speech.

Mr. Speaker, with the way the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE), my friend, has been talking, you might think that President Biden caused inflation all on his own. That is just simply not the case, and everybody here knows that.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article from the nonpartisan, nonprofit Economic Policy Institute titled: ''Rising Inflation is a Global Problem, U.S. Policy Choices Are Not to Blame.''

[From the Economic Policy Institute, Aug. 4, 2022]

RISING INFLATION IS A GLOBAL PROBLEM. U.S. POLICY CHOICES ARE NOT TO BLAME

(By Josh Bivens, Asha Banerjee, And Mariia Dzholos)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

An international comparison among OECD countries shows that rising inflation is a global phenomenon, not unique to the United States.

This fact argues strongly that high inflation in the U.S. has not been driven by any unique American policy—not the American Rescue Plan and other generous fiscal relief during the pandemic recession and recovery nor anything else U.S.-centric.

Some have argued that the global rise of inflation means that many countries—including the U.S.—overstimulated their economies and generated excess aggregate demand. But this explanation is not supported by the data. The countries with larger declines in unemployment over the past 18 months have not seen larger inflation spikes.

Consumer price data for June 2022 showed another month of rapid inflation, with overall inflation rising 9.1 percent year-over-year and core inflation (which doesn't include volatile energy and food prices) rising by 5.9 percent. This level of inflation has obviously become a major political issue this year. But however this issue resonates politically, as an economic matter a common narrative that blames the Biden administration and its policy choices for causing the inflation is deeply misleading.

This is not simply a case for exonerating the Biden administration's choices—how the recent inflationary outbreak is interpreted will have huge consequences for how policymakers respond. A loud chorus of economic analysts and influential policymakers continue highlighting the need for the Federal Reserve to continue raising interest rates sharply to slow growth to ''rein in'' inflation. This approach risks terrible consequences and threatens to cast aside the amazing policy achievement of a full jobs recovery from the pandemic recession. In the COVID–19 recession, the economy lost over 22 million jobs. But by June 2022 (after 28 months), the level of employment in the U.S. matched the last month pre-pandemic (February 2020). Compare this with job growth after the Great Recession of 2008–09, when it took more than six years (75 months) to regain the just under 9 million jobs lost and match pre-recession employment levels. The far faster recovery from the COVID–19 recession was significantly driven by a much more aggressive fiscal policy response.

This more aggressive fiscal response is often blamed for the inflation outbreak over the past 18 months. The most persuasive evidence casting doubt on this interpretation is a comparison of inflation between the U.S. and a large set of other rich countries that undertook a wide array of fiscal responses. Despite the different fiscal responses, essentially all of these countries have experienced a rapid acceleration of core inflation. This means that today's inflation is not a uniquely U.S. problem, and therefore not connected to the necessary and effective economic policies that spearheaded the rapid economic recovery we see today.

In Figure A, we focus on core inflation (stripping out the prices of energy and food) because that is widely considered a better target for basing decisions about macroeconomic stabilization. Energy and food prices are not just volatile, they are also set on global markets, meaning that their price changes carry very little information about whether the U.S. economy specifically is currently experiencing macroeconomic imbalances. It's also useful to highlight core inflation because much commentary has claimed that inflation in other advanced economies is overwhelmingly about energy and food prices, and far less about core prices. This claim is not supported by the data in Figure A.

As Figure A shows, all but one Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country saw an acceleration in core inflation. More significantly, this international comparison tells us that the U.S. is not an outlier in its experience with accelerating core inflation (the one obvious outlier in this data—Turkey—is currently experiencing inflation over 40 percent and is not included in the figure). The U.S. is on the higher side of inflation experiences, but far from the top and not that far above the average (or even the median) for all other OECD countries. The upshot of the figure is clear: A global phenomenon—accelerating inflation—demands a global explanation, and ''Biden policies'' obviously do not provide that.

Some have argued that the global rise in inflation is actually just evidence that the excess demand growth they see as driving inflation is also global. Of course, even this perspective provides some small bit of exoneration for American policymakers: if every advanced country in the entire world made similar policy decisions, then it seems hard to argue that the American approach was an avoidable mistake. But, another cut at the international data casts doubt on a simple story of macroeconomic imbalances driving the global inflation surge. Specifically, countries with larger declines in unemployment over the past 18 months have not seen larger inflation spikes.

In Figure B below, the vertical axis is the acceleration of core inflation relative to prepandemic trend that we showed previously in Figure A. On the horizontal axis, we subtract the average unemployment rate of March–May 2022 from the average unemployment rate that prevailed in 2018–2019. This can be taken as an indicator of how much unemployment has improved in a country in the recent period relative to pre-pandemic conditions. The higher the number on the horizontal axis, the lower is current unemployment relative to pre-pandemic averages. If one interprets unemployment that is lower today than pre-pandemic times as evidence of strong demand growth, one would expect to see a positive relationship between the improvement in unemployment (horizontal axis) and the acceleration of inflation (vertical axis). But there is no such significant relationship (in fact, there is a weak relationship the other way, with countries with higher unemployment relative to pre-pandemic times seeing higher inflation).

This finding should further complicate the claim that the ''macroeconomic overheating'' argument should simply be applied globally. And if there is not strong evidence that today's global inflation is simply driven by excess global demand, the payoff to strongly reining in demand could be quite small, and the damage caused by this quite large.

Rather than the specific policies of the Biden administration driving inflation, the roots of today's inflation are a more complicated cocktail of other forces: from the spike in raw material, energy, and commodities prices due in large part to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to lingering supply chain disruptions and distorted consumer demand patterns stemming from the pandemic. These shocks and their unexpectedly large ripple effects are the global explanation for rising inflation.

Again, this is not an academic exercise or simply providing political cover for any particular policymaker. Instead, there is real economic danger from misdiagnosing the inflation problem. An engineered, unnecessary recession will only cause more economic pain to those still just recovering from the COVID–19 recession, and will undercut the strong economic recovery underway.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD an article by Mark Zandi of Moody's Analytics which states that Speaker McCARTHY's radical cuts would meaningfully increase the likelihood of a recession and result in 780,000 fewer jobs by the end of 2024 compared with a clean bill to avoid a default.

[From Moody's Analytics]

THE DEBT LIMIT DRAMA HEATS UP

(By Mark Zandi and Bernard Yaros)

The political drama over the Treasury debt limit is suddenly heating up. With April tax receipts coming in weaker than expected, at least so far, it appears that the X-date, when the Treasury will run out of the cash needed to pay the government's bills on time, may hit as soon as early June. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy's recent unveiling of proposed legislation to increase the limit is thus none too soon. In exchange for increasing the debt limit just enough so that it will not be a problem again until about this time next year, the Speaker wants to significantly cut discretionary spending over the next decade, impose stricter work requirements on healthcare, food and other assistance for low-income households, and roll back much of the Biden's administration's agenda on climate change and student lending. In this note, we assess the macroeconomic consequences of the Speaker's debt limit legislation.

THE X-DATE

The Treasury debt limit—the maximum amount of debt that the Treasury can issue to the public or to other federal agencies—was hit on January 19, and since then the Treasury has been using ''extraordinary measures'' to come up with the additional cash needed to pay the government's bills. Nailing down precisely when these extraordinary measures will be exhausted, and Treasury will run out of cash and thus be unable to pay everyone on time—the so-called X-date—is difficult. It depends on the timing of highly uncertain tax receipts and government expenditures.

Since Moody's Analytics began estimating the X-date early this year, we have thought it to be in mid-August. But April tax receipts are running 35 percent below last year's pace, which is meaningfully weaker than anticipated. And despite weaker tax refunds than anticipated, it appears that the X-date may come as soon as early June. If not, and Treasury is able to squeak by with enough cash, then the X-date looks more likely to be in late July. That is because Treasury will get a cash infusion from nonwithheld tax payments around the June 15 estimated tax deadline, and then another tranche of extraordinary measures will become available, providing Treasury with a few more weeks of cash.

INVESTORS TAKE NOTICE

Regardless, time is running out for lawmakers to act and increase or suspend the debt limit, and global investors are suddenly focusing on the risks posed if they do not act in time. Credit default swaps on Treasury securities—the cost of buying insurance in case Treasury fails to pay its debt on time—have jumped in recent weeks. At close to 100 basis points, CDS spreads on six-month and one-year Treasury securities are already substantially more than in 2011 when that debt limit drama was so unnerving it caused rating agency Standard & Poor's to strip the U.S. of its AAA rating.

This may overstate investors' angst as the CDS market for buying insurance in the case of a Treasury default is not actively traded, and it does not take much trading to push up the cost of insurance. A few hedge funds speculating on the CDS could drive up the cost since they are purchasing something akin to a lottery ticket. Moreover, the current spread remains far from signaling that investors are attaching much of a probability on a default. For context, during the European debt crisis in 2011, the CDS spread on the sovereign debt of stressed countries in the periphery of the euro zone, including Greece, topped out at 1,400 basis points. Even the CDS for core euro zone countries such as Germany and France were more than 200 basis points at the time.

That said, the run up in Treasury CDS should not be dismissed out of hand. The recent sharp decline in one-month Treasury bill yields also signals mounting investor angst. As it has become clear in recent days that April tax receipts were coming in weak and the X-date may be just a few weeks away, investors have piled into the safety of one-month Treasury securities. Yields have plummeted, from 4.75 percent at the start of April to less than 3.4 percent currently. At the same time, yields on three-month Treasury bills have continued to rise. The difference between one- and three-month Treasury bill yields has never been as wide. Global investors thus appear to be attaching nonzero odds that the debt limit drama will end with a default sometime in June or July.

HOUSE REPUBLICAN PROPOSAL

It is thus none too soon that House Speaker McCarthy unveiled the ''Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023'' on April 19. House Republicans hope the legislation will put political pressure on President Biden to negotiate changes in fiscal policy in exchange for an increase in the debt limit. The president continues to reject these efforts, arguing for a so-called clean debt limit increase—an increase in the debt limit without substantive changes to policy. His position is that increasing the debt limit is necessary to pay the government's bills resulting from past fiscal policy decisions, over which there can be no negotiation.

Speaker McCarthy's proposed legislation would increase the debt limit by $1.5 trillion or until March 31, 2024, whichever comes first. In exchange, it would cut government spending by $4.5 trillion over the next decade and implement a number of consequential changes to fiscal policy. The most significant spending cuts would come by setting fiscal 2024 discretionary spending equal to fiscal 2022 spending levels. Annual spending growth would then be capped at 1 percent for the next decade. While not stipulated in the legislation, Republicans would likely work to exclude discretionary spending on defense and veterans' benefits from the cuts, putting the burden of the cuts on nondefense, non-VA discretionary programs. If nondefense discretionary outlays were to bear the full brunt of the proposed budget cuts, they would fall to 2 percent of GDP by fiscal 2033, the lowest since at least the early 1960s.

The Speaker's debt limit legislation also works to roll back a number of President Biden's policy initiatives. On energy policy, the legislation would focus on increasing fossil fuel supplies through the enactment of House Republicans' energy package, which aims to boost oil and gas production and mining by cutting down on the time it takes to greenlight energy projects. It would also end tax breaks for clean-energy projects and qualifying electric vehicles included in the Inflation Reduction Act.

On student lending, the legislation would prevent a couple of key executive orders by the Biden administration, including the White House's plan to provide up to $20,000 in student loan forgiveness for some borrowers. That hit a roadblock last year when it was met with several legal challenges, and the Supreme Court is expected to decide its fate later this year. An income-driven repayment plan rolled out by the Education Department earlier this year is also in the crosshairs.

The Speaker's legislation also imposes restrictions on income support programs, including work requirements on Medicaid recipients who do not have children, an increase in the age limit for work rules under Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food assistance), and a requirement that states report on work outcomes under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. It eliminates much of the additional funding provided to the IRS last year to help increase tax enforcement efforts and improve taxpayer services, and it rescinds unspent COVID–19 relief funds. And the legislation would also require congressional approval before major regulations could take effect.

MACROECONOMIC IMPACTS

The Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023 would cut into near-term economic growth if passed into law. Compared with a scenario that includes a clean debt limit increase and no other significant changes to fiscal policy under current law, real GDP in the year ending in the fourth quarter of 2024 would be 0.65 percentage point lower. That is, in the Clean Debt Limit scenario, real GDP is expected to grow 2.25 percent in the year compared with 1.6 percent if Speaker McCarthy's legislation becomes law.

While the economy skirts recession in both scenarios, recession risks are uncomfortably high, with a consensus of economists and many investors and business executives expecting a downturn beginning late this year or early next. The timing of the government spending cuts in the Limit, Save, Grow Act is thus especially inopportune as it would meaningfully increase the likelihood of such a downturn. Indeed, under the legislation, GDP growth is so weak that employment declines in the first three quarter of 2024, and the unemployment rate rises by more than a percentage point to 4.6 percent by the fourth quarter of 2024. Compared with the Clean Debt Limit scenario, by year-end 2024, employment is 780,000 jobs lower, and the unemployment rate is 0.36 percentage point higher.

The significant government spending cuts in the Limit, Save, Grow Act are substantial headwinds to near-term economic growth. The cuts reduce nondefense outlays by $120 billion in fiscal 2024 compared with the Clean Debt Limit scenario, equal to about half a percentage point of GDP. The multipliers on this spending—the change in GDP a year after a change in spending—are estimated to be just over 1, as the programs suffering budget cuts are essential government services and tend to benefit lower-income households that quickly spend any support they receive from the government. Adding to the economic headwinds created by the legislation is the considerable uncertainty created by having to address the debt limit again a year from now. Given that 2024 is a presidential election year, that future debt limit drama may well be even more heated than the current one. This is sure to weigh on investor, business and consumer confidence and thus economic activity.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DELUZIO).

Mr. DELUZIO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the rule to advance this bill. I am opposed to the bill.

This bill includes massive cuts to veterans' care, 30 million fewer medical visits for my fellow veterans. We are going to see my fellow veterans wait longer to have their claims heard. They are going to see telehealth get worse, mental health services get worse, and homelessness issues get worse. This bill is a betrayal of the obligation this country has to everyone who served.

I have seen my fellow veterans used as props on folks' websites and in their ads, people wrap themselves in the flag.

Guess what? You don't get to claim you are here for veterans, standing up for veterans when you cut their care. That is what this bill does. It is a disgrace. Everyone in the country ought to know it. We ought to vote it down.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself quickly such time as I may consume just to correct my friend. I did not blame all inflation on President Biden. He had a lot of help. He had a Democratic House and a Democratic Senate that worked with him to get there, so he certainly didn't do it on his own.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK), my very good friend, and a distinguished member of the Budget Committee.

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, for the first time in my 15 years in Congress, I will vote for a debt limit increase because for the first time we have a bill that is serious about controlling the reckless spending that is destroying America's productivity and its prosperity—$4.8 trillion in savings.

How could anyone who cares about the debt not vote for this measure?

The debt limit is there for a reason. If your family is living beyond its means and needs to raise its credit limit, it better sit down around the kitchen table and have a serious discussion over the circumstances that have gotten it into this mess and what steps it needs to take to get out. The debt limit is there to assure that we have exactly that discussion as a Nation.

Now, the President and the Democrats across the aisle say they are not willing to engage in that discussion. Well, to coin a phrase, ''Come on, man.''

When Bill Clinton lost the House in 1994, he reached across the aisle to work with House Republicans. Together, a Democratic President and a Republican House accomplished wonderful things. They reformed the welfare system, as this bill does; they cut spending as a percentage of GDP; they produced the biggest capital gains tax cut in history; but most importantly, they balanced four budgets in a row and produced one of the greatest economic expansions in our Nation's history.

By the way, Clinton was reelected.

Americans are soon going to ask themselves, are we better off than we were 4 years ago?

Mr. Biden is going to need a better answer than doubling down on policies that two-thirds of Americans are desperately trying to tell him have put our country on the wrong track, and that answer is right here before us today.

Mr. Speaker, I beg the Democrats to join us to set our Nation's finances in order.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the gentleman, extortion is not a negotiation. President Biden actually has a budget that will reduce the deficit. It would be better if the Republicans actually came up with a budget, and we could talk about that. We are willing to have a conversation, but we are not willing to be extorted here.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt about the fact that this bill could monumentally hurt our Nation's heroes.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter from the Paralyzed Veterans of America and a letter from the Veterans of Foreign Wars in opposition to this bill.

[From the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Apr. 25, 2023]

CONGRESS, PROTECT ALL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS NEEDED BY PARALYZED VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, Paralyzed Veterans of America Executive Director Carl Blake issued a statement in light of the House' consideration later today of the debt limit package (Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023).

''Right now the House of Representatives is preparing to take action on legislation that would couple raising the debt limit with significant cuts in federal spending. PVA has received assurances from some Republican leaders that veterans' funding will not be a target of these cuts, and we appreciate these assurances! But the pending legislation provides no specific protections for veterans with catastrophic disabilities, specifically the services and supports they and their families depend on. Efforts to address the federal deficit must provide concrete protections for veterans, their families, and caregivers, which means explicit direction that the Department of Veterans Affairs' budget will not suffer significant cuts.

Although ensuring the VA will have the funding needed to meet its fiscal year 2024 needs is our foremost concern, we urge Congress to remember that veterans with significant disabilities depend upon many other Federal services and supports outside of the VA that protect their disability civil rights, employment support, affordable accessible housing, as well as provide benefits that help their families and caregivers. Our responsibility as a nation is to ensure that those who have already sacrificed so much for our way of life are not forced to do so again.''

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS,
April 25, 2023.

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER MCCARTHY: On behalf of the 1.5 million members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and its Auxiliary, a significant number of whom rely on U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care and benefits, we write to express our grave concerns with the proposed reports of returning to Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) funding levels for the federal government and its potential effects on veterans programs. Congress has championed monumental advancements in veteran care and benefits in the past few years and we believe we need to continue pushing forward instead of taking steps backward in serving our veterans.

Plainly stated, the Honoring our PACT Act of 2022 did not exist when funding levels were set for FY 2022. The VFW is gravely concerned the Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023 missed the mark by not protecting the advances in care and benefits for toxic-exposed veterans. This could set our collective hard work back years and make veterans once again have to fight for the care and benefits they have earned.

Through PACT Act reforms, we believe we are on the cusp of resolving many issues that have plagued VA for decades, thanks to the years of hard work from veteran advocates around the country, as well as our faithful supporters in the past few Congresses and across multiple Presidential Administrations. Military Toxic Exposure claim denials, VA processing backlogs, hiring delays, and unacceptable appointment wait times will hopefully be a thing of the past, and we will once again be able to point to VA as a world-class provider of healthcare and benefits. These advancements will fade away if they are not resourced properly, which is why the VFW believes returning funding levels to FY22 would likely jeopardize the care and benefits our nation's veterans have earned.

Bills aiming to return the budget to FY22 funding levels, without explicitly securing care and benefit programs for veterans are intolerable to our organization. The service members, veterans, and families we represent have seen the true cost of more than 20 years of war, and it is unacceptable to ask them to now pay the bill.

Mr. Speaker, the VFW understands your goal of fiscal responsibility, but we respectfully ask that in the context of Limit, Save, Grow, that you provide explicit assurances on how Congress will continue to properly invest in VA programming—specifically, the reforms authorized through the PACT Act. The members of the VFW and our Auxiliary hope you will continue to honor the promise made to the men and women who served our country by reinforcing your long-standing support of those who stood in harm's way. Returning VA to FY22 funding levels will negatively affect millions of Americans across the country and we look forward to working with you to make sure this does not happen.

Sincerely,

RYAN M. GALLUCCI,
Executive Director, VFW Washington Office.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, it is clear our veterans are against this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCANLON), a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

Ms. SCANLON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the rule and the underlying bill.

This bill makes good on Speaker McCarthy's threat to hold the economy hostage. Several of my colleagues have spoken about the draconian cuts that this bill would make to our social safety net, to services for vulnerable veterans, seniors, families, and children, but it also jeopardizes critical investments that were just enacted as part of the historic and long-overdue climate rescue measures that were included in the Inflation Reduction Act, and those cuts have received less attention.

If you didn't know that this bill gutted billions of dollars of environmental measures, you are not alone. Those cuts were made in a deal the Speaker negotiated with the extremists who control his Conference sometime after midnight last night, around 2 a.m. this morning. I am not surprised that they are trying to sneak this provision into a bill that they are ramming through the House with no hearings.

The Speaker and his far-right allies argue that Federal spending poses the most significant threat to our country while blocking legislation to address gun violence, healthcare concerns, and other pressing concerns for all of our constituents, but climate change is an actual existential threat to our children and to all future generations.

I know the Republican Party isn't fond of looking at the science, but without intervention, the facts are clear: Our children will be forced to face more frequent climate disasters, new and devastating health threats, and untold economic loss. The extremist bill before us dismantles the clean energy climate rescue programs that we passed in the IRA that are essential for our children to thrive.

This bill eliminates a billion dollars to promote energy efficient construction, $5 billion for loans to back energy infrastructure projects, $1.9 billion to improve access to public transportation in low-income neighborhoods, and $5 billion to reduce climate pollution in addition to gutting environmental review protections.

Mr. Speaker, I am appalled that the Republican Party would so carelessly leverage our children's future, health, and safety to satisfy political extremists. I am disturbed by the shadowy process used to put this bill together.

I encourage all of my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this rule and the underlying bill.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, in response to my friend's statement, we are certainly not trying to extort anything from anyone. Quite frankly, it is my Democratic friends who are trying to extract something from us that they can't get for themselves. If you believe a clean debt ceiling is the way to go, pass one in a Democratic Senate. You can't do it. The reality is there has to be a negotiation here. What we have said is: Hey, we are in good faith extending the debt ceiling; we are doing it in this bill. We have a lot of Members who have never voted to do that, who are actually doing it.

Here is our opening position in the negotiation. What is yours? We haven't heard that. It is just simply, well, give us what we want and pass the President's budget. If they genuinely want to talk, we are giving them the opportunity to actually do that.

I remind my friend, we look forward to discussion, but the first step is to raise the debt ceiling. That is what we are going to do here, then we will see what the Democrats do in the United States Senate in response. Then we can all go to conference and talk this thing out and hopefully come to a bipartisan solution.

The hysterics and theatrics might make good print. That is not the reality of the process here. We are operating within the spirit of the process. We hope our friends do the same.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ), a distinguished member of the Rules Committee.

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Madam Speaker, I left the Capitol at 3 a.m. this morning, after fighting Republicans' plans to default on America unless we impose drastic spending cuts, cuts that are so severe they will hurt farmers and ranchers, kids and families, and this beautiful place we call home. Nobody in any State will be protected from their draconian cuts.

When I asked how to explain the bill's drastic cuts to rural communities in my district, the Republicans' response was, ''You should tell them that we have to prioritize.''

The Rules Committee Republicans then blocked my amendment to protect rural water, housing, and business development programs. In essence, they said to rural America, you are not a priority.

The Republicans blocked my amendment to protect veterans' healthcare, the Indian Health Service, and clean energy investments. Veterans are clearly not their priority. Healthcare is clearly not their priority. Addressing the climate crisis that is fueling disasters across America, across the United States, and across this planet is clearly not their priority.

Do you like knowing your food is safe?

The Republicans' bill could cut 1,800 USDA food inspectors and cost our farmers, ranchers, and restaurants $89 billion in lost production and $2.2 billion in lost wages.

The majority blocked my amendment to protect the Food Safety and Inspection Service from cuts.

When Republicans now demand we cut spending on healthcare, safety, and housing, what is it for?

To pay for the tax cuts for the rich that they pushed through in 2017. Protecting the rich and the wealthy tax cheats clearly must be their priority.

□ 1300

Through backroom dealings, the Republican majority has now settled on a bill that backstabs working families. Their bill delivers poison, not prosperity.

Congress must not default on America. America pays its bills. America knows how to prioritize what is essential for our prosperity.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I think if you happen to be listening to the debate, you might get confused. It is as if we are going to impose our will on somebody.

The reality is the Democrats control the United States Senate. The Democratic President of the United States has a veto that he can sustain in either Chamber.

What we are saying is let's sit down and talk things through, and here is our opening position. That is all that is going on here.

We are not in a position here to do what my friends did last time, and that is both what they regret losing and fear might someday come to pass.

The last time my friends didn't have to negotiate 2 years ago, what did they do? An explosion of spending that generated the worst inflation in modern American history; the worst inflation in over 40 years.

Looking around this Chamber, I think I am probably the only one here old enough to remember it.

The reality is they took a crisis that was ending and used it to justify $1.9 trillion worth of spending that many of their own economists warned them would lead to inflation. They jammed it through without a single vote.

The next year, they called something an Inflation Reduction Act that we all know was a climate bill. They crammed through another $500 billion worth of spending.

That doesn't even include plussing up the regular discretionary accounts of the United States. My friends own the inflation that has impoverished every single American.

Every American family is worse off, not better off, given the economic stewardship of this administration and, frankly, the Democratic Congress.

We look forward to the debate. We look forward to something my friends aren't used to doing, that is actually negotiating, and that is what we are talking about.

We are going to extend the debt limit, just as we said we would. Here is our negotiation. Here are our ideas where we can save money. Do you have any ideas where we can save money?

Let's talk about that because you can't get what you want. You can't pass through a Democratic Senate a clean debt bill.

If you can't do it there, you are certainly not going to do it here, so let's begin the discussion sooner rather than later.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, my good friend from Oklahoma said that we are engaged in theatrics. Well, let me put that to rest. I mean, we are dealing with real numbers.

Last night in the Rules Committee, I asked the chairman of Ways and Means and the chairman of the Budget Committee some basic questions about the SNAP program. They had no clue.

People who don't have a clue shouldn't be writing legislation to determine policy. They should do the hearings and learn about what the facts are.

Madam Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following:

A letter from the Department of Energy, which states that reductions of this magnitude in this bill would have significant setbacks on U.S. competitiveness to adversarial nations like Russia and China;

A letter from the Department of Labor which states that these cuts in this bill would prevent more than 4,000 veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness from receiving critical employment care;

A letter from the Department of Education, which states that under these radical cuts, funding for more than 100,000 teaching jobs nationwide would be eliminated, and it would reduce aid for more than 6.6 million Pell Grant recipients;

A letter from the Small Business Administration, which states that Republican spending cuts would mean that almost 300,000 fewer small businesses would be able to participate in their entrepreneurial development program;

A letter from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which states that 286,000 families will lose rental assistance under the Republicans' proposed budget cuts and thousands more would be at risk for homelessness;

A letter from the Department of Homeland Security, which states that the proposed cuts could lead to more illegal drugs entering our country, including 350,000 grams of fentanyl. That is over 200 million fatal doses of fentanyl that Republicans will be responsible for letting into our country.

Madam Speaker, I also include in the RECORD a letter from the Department of Agriculture detailing how these radical Republican budget cuts would lead to more than a million new mothers losing WIC assistance.

THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY,
Washington, DC, March 17, 2023.

Hon. ROSA L. DELAURO,
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE DELAURO: I share the concern expressed in your letter dated January 19, 2023, about potential impacts of proposals that would cap fiscal year (FY) 2024 discretionary spending at the FY 2022 enacted levels. While Congressional Republicans have not released a specific plan, cuts on this scale would have very real and damaging impacts on our families, our communities, our economy, and our competitiveness—undermining a broad range of critical services the American people rely on in their everyday lives.

President Biden's FY 2024 Budget, which he released on March 9, details his plans to invest in America, continue to lower costs for families, protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and reduce the deficit. Meanwhile, Congressional Republicans have reportedly proposed unprecedented cuts in FY 2024 funding for key services, programs, and protections such as education, public safety, research, nutrition and more. Such action would have serious consequences for Department of Energy programs and initiatives at the Federal, state, Tribal, and local levels, and would jeopardize recent bipartisan gains targeted at improving the lives of everyday Americans.

Impacts would be felt across the country and could rise to the level of jeopardizing the Department's ability to do its part in protecting national security interests from energy security and nuclear security threats.

Capping funding at this level would also hamper our ability to cut energy costs for families and businesses across the country, reduce the number of everyday Americans that can access tax breaks for clean energy, and reduce the impact of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Specific examples of potential impacts are listed below.

Scenario 1. Across-the-board cap on FY 2024 discretionary spending at FY 2022 levels. Example impacts are listed below:

A reduction to FY 2022 funding levels would delay all National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) major construction projects of at least one year, increasing operational risks and the likelihood of cost increases. The FY 2022 funding level represents a ⅓ reduction from planned execution in FY 2024.

The W93 and W87–1 warhead modernization programs would be delayed at least 1–2 years, with significant risks for the aging U.S. stockpile, DoD plans for delivery system modernization, and U.S. support for the United Kingdom's Replacement Warhead.

Hundreds of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy research projects and 2–3 large infrastructure projects at national labs would be cancelled or paused, resulting in up to one thousand (1,000) layoffs within the labs, partner organizations, and the local construction and support workforce across the country. This would negatively impact the ability of the national laboratories to continue to advance cutting edge research.

Scenario 2. Across-the-board 22 percent reduction to current enacted funding levels (FY 2023) for FY 2024. Example impacts of this scenario are listed below. Scenario 1 impacts would also be intensified:

At a minimum, research at Office of Science national laboratories and universities would be reduced by about $700 million, resulting in substantial reduction of nearly 5,200 scientists, students, and technical staff.

Many of the Administration research priorities would receive significantly less funding resulting in curtailed research efforts in the areas of Climate Change; Artificial Intelligence; High Performance Computing; emerging technologies in Quantum Information Science, Microelectronics, and Biotechnology; Fusion Energy; and Isotope Production.

At a minimum, Office of Science facility operations funding would be reduced, resulting in only 68 percent of operational funding and a substantial reduction of over 6,000 users of the over 38,000 annual users at the 28 scientific user facilities across the national laboratories.

All facilities would have a significant reduction in force of personnel, with loss of critical expertise. A review would be required to determine which facilities to close to maintain adequate operations at the remaining user facilities. Facilities cannot operate safely at this funding level. This action would result in major economic impact to the United States, both in the short-term and in the long-term as the U.S. will be subject to loss of scientific talent and leadership.

At a minimum, thousands of low-income households (anywhere from 4,400–8,800) would be deferred from weatherization services, and reductions in state energy programs more broadly would limit efforts to cut energy costs for families and businesses, disproportionately affecting smaller states and US territories.

Reductions of this magnitude would have significant setbacks of U.S. geopolitical competitiveness to adversarial nations like Russia and China.

This would include the reduction of the Idaho National Laboratory operational status to the minimal allowable for safe and secure support of DOE and national security programs and research.

It would also include elimination of all efforts to support the deployment of American nuclear energy technologies as the preferred alternative to Russian and Chinese technologies in countries looking to implement large scale power sources.

These are a few examples of the serious impacts of these scenarios on ongoing efforts by the Department in the areas of national security, safety of critical infrastructure, threats to the Nation's competitive edge, and impacts on consumers and industry.

Sincerely,

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CONGRESSIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

Hon. ROSA DELAURO,
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER DELAURO: Thank you for contacting the Department of Labor (DOL) with important questions about the impact of capping discretionary spending levels at the fiscal year (FY) 2022 enacted level on workers and their families. The Department of Labor's mission is to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of the

United States; improve working conditions; advance opportunities for profitable employment; and assure work-related benefits and rights. This includes centering our work on the most vulnerable and marginalized workers, those facing barriers to employment, misclassified workers, and workers in temporary jobs or other jobs that heighten their economic insecurity and vulnerability.

On March 9, 2023, the President released his Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget. The FY 2024 budget request builds on the Biden-Harris Administration's successes, reinforces President Biden's investments in America, continues to lower costs for families, protects and strengthens Social Security and Medicare, and reduces the deficit. The Department's role in this effort is to ensure that all workers and job seekers in America—particularly those from disadvantaged communities—have access to high-quality jobs that can support a middle-class life. That includes accessing training and finding pathways to high-quality jobs as well as protecting workers' rights and benefits, health and safety, and wages once they are employed.

The potential cuts you describe in your letter would have very real and damaging impacts on our families, communities, economy, and competitiveness—undermining a broad range of critical services the American people rely on in their everyday lives.

These drastic reductions in spending proposed by certain Congressional Republicans would be devastating—undermining our ability to protect our nation's most vulnerable workers and hindering our efforts to address critical issues like exploitative child labor. These types of cuts would send an unmistakable message that the workers who were essential during the pandemic are expendable, diminishing the value of their work and failing to honor them by ensuring their wages, health, and safety are protected. Additionally, drastically cutting funding levels would mean fewer resources for workforce training programs designed to ensure there is a workforce armed with the skills needed to fill high-quality jobs in our growing economy.

Below please find specific examples of how funding cuts would impact Department of Labor programs and the workers we aim to serve. For each example, the Department analyzed two scenarios: (1) FY 2024 appropriations equal to 22 percent below currently enacted levels and (2) FY 2024 appropriations equal to the FY 2022 enacted levels.

LIMITING ACCESS TO TRAINING FOR JOB SEEKERS AND WORKERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The Employment and Training Administration provides grants to states for running the Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker employment programs, which provide training and job assistance services. Reductions to each of those programs would result in people losing critical services they need to obtain and retain better jobs.

Workfbrce Development & Training: A 22 percent reduction would prevent about 750,000 job seekers from accessing services and training through ETA-funded programming. A return to FY 2022 enacted levels would result in about 125,000 fewer job seekers receiving services and training from the workforce development system.

Registered Apprenticeship: A 22 percent reduction would lead to over 100,000 fewer workers being employed through Registered Apprenticeships. A return to FY 2022 enacted levels would lead to 76,000 fewer workers being employed through Registered Apprenticeships.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP): A 22 percent reduction would lead to almost 10,000 fewer low-income older workers participating in paid community service work.

Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC): If funding levels were reduced by 22 percent, there would be significant processing delays across the labor certification programs. Labor certification decisions for nonimmigrant visas, especially for seasonal nonagricultural businesses, would be delayed. Employers would have to wait up to 2 additional months for decisions on their ability to hire H–2B workers.

In the PERM immigrant program, labor certification decision would increase 73 percent, from 188 days (FY 2022) to approximately 325 days. Similarly, if funding levels reverted to the FY 2022 level, and workloads continued to rise, average processing times in the FLC programs would continue to increase. OFLC would prioritize available resources to address more time-sensitive H–2A and H–2B applications for farmers and seasonal nonagricultural businesses.

WEAKENING WAGE AND SAFETY PROTECTIONS FOR WORKERS

The Wage and Hour Division (WHD) promotes compliance with basic labor laws and ensures that workers receive the protections they are entitled to under the law. Last year, WHD staff recovered more than $213 million in back wages for nearly 153,000 workers—an average of $1.400 per worker. These recovered wages make a real difference for workers struggling to pay rent. buy food, pay for childcare, or cover gas or transportation costs to get to their jobs.

Cuts to WHD funding levels would undermine the agency's ability to ensure workers receive the wages that they've earned. WHD would be forced to reduce the number of compliance actions, investigations, and targeted inspections that result in recovery for thousands of workers.

Specifically, a 22 percent reduction in funding levels would result in about $156 million less in back wages for 135,000 workers or an average over $1,000 per worker. A return to FY 2022 enacted levels would result in $24.5 million less in back wages recovered for nearly 21,000 workers.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) works to assure safe and healthful working conditions. Every worker deserves to return home safely at the end of the day. Cutting OSHA's budget by one-fifth would mean fewer inspections, fewer staff, less enforcement, and less safe and healthy workplaces.

A 22 percent budget reduction would result in OSHA losing at least 270 inspectors and conducting 10,800 fewer inspections. This would be by far the lowest level of enforcement in OSHA's 52-year history. Fewer inspections would significantly reduce OSHA's ability to conduct proactive and more complex inspections such as those involving chemical exposure, heat, musculoskeletal injuries, and workplace violence. A return to 2022 enacted levels would result in 2,800 fewer safety inspections and 715 fewer health inspections.

OSHA would drastically cut back on responding to worker complaints and proactive inspections, including strategic priorities like silica, heat, and fall protection. Reducing OSHA's ability to conduct preventive inspections would result in more workplace injuries and illnesses—allowing unscrupulous employers to put workers in danger under a weaker, more predictable, and less strategic OSHA.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) works to prevent death, illness. and injury from mining and promote safe and healthful workplaces for U.S. miners. MSHA's enforcement responsibilities—statutorily mandated inspections, accident investigations, and responding to hazard complaints, among others—have contributed significantly to the reduction in fatal mining accidents.

Significant budget cuts would jeopardize the health and safety of the nation's miners. For example, under a 22 percent reduction, MSHA would not be able to complete approximately 4,400 mandatory inspections of surface and underground mines. Fatal accident investigation activities would continue but MSHA could not perform serious injury accident investigations and could only investigate 75 percent of hazard complaints in a timely manner. Targeted safety and health initiatives that address hazards associated with the leading causes of mining fatalities and occupational illnesses would not occur. Approximately one third of coal mine plan and addenda approvals, which are necessary for operators to continue mining operations, would be delayed by approximately a month.

At the FY 2022 funding level, MSHA would not be able to complete approximately 2,200 mandatory inspections of surface and underground mines. Fatal accident investigations would continue, but MSHA would be limited in its ability to perform any serious accident investigations and could only investigate 50 percent of the hazard complaints in a timely manner. Approximately 3,200 samples for respirable dust, silica, diesel particulate matter, and other toxic substances would not be taken, putting miners at risk of developing preventable debilitating occupational illnesses like Black Lung and silicosis.

ELIMINATING CRITICAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR VETERANS

The Department's Veterans' Employment and Training Service helps veterans transition to employment, protects their employment rights, and promotes their employment opportunities.

The Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program provides intensive employment and job placement services for eligible veterans, and JVSG fund allow states to hire qualified veterans to provide these services. There are currently over 1,800 JVSG staff at 2,300 American Job Centers (AJC) nationwide. A 22 percent reduction would result in 4,282 fewer veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness receiving employment services through the Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP). A return to the 2022 enacted level would lead to a reduction of 16 staff serving veterans at AJCs as well as 1,428 fewer veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness receiving employment services through HVRP.

I have seen first-hand the positive impacts of the Biden-Harris plan. 202 1 and 2022 were the two strongest years of job growth in our nation's history. More than 12 million jobs have been created since President Biden took office—including nearly 800.000 manufacturing jobs. The unemployment rate has been below 4% for more than a year, and a record number of small businesses have started since President Biden took office. Black Americans and Hispanic Americans have near-record-low unemployment rates and people with disabilities are experiencing record-low unemployment.

The Department stands ready and committed to continuing the plan as laid out by the Biden-Harris Administration to build an economy and a labor market that is more just and equitable and creates opportunity for all.

LIZ WATSON,
Assistant Secretary, Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, U.S. Department of Labor.

THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION,
Washington, DC, March 17, 2023.

Hon. ROSA DELAURO,
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER DELAURO: Thank you for your letter of January 19, 2023, requesting details regarding the potential impact of proposed budget cuts on the economy, neighborhoods, and other essential government functions that keep people healthy and safe.

President Biden's FY24 Budget lays out a detailed plan to invest in America, continue to lower costs for families, protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and reduce the deficit. Meanwhile, Congressional Republicans have proposed unprecedented cuts in fiscal year (FY) 2024 funding for key services, programs, and protections such as education, public safety, research, nutrition and more. Cuts on this scale would have very real and damaging impacts on our families, our communities, our economy, and our competitiveness—undermining a broad range of critical services the American people rely on in their everyday lives.

Your letter specifically references a plan to cap fiscal year 2024 discretionary spending at the fiscal year 2022 enacted level. Your letter makes clear that the impact of such a plan on agency appropriation levels is at this time unknown, as the specifics of the plan have not been publicly released. If we assumed that defense funding would be shielded from budget cuts under this plan, it would equate to a cut of about 22 percent to non-defense discretionary funding. Accordingly, we analyzed impacts at two levels: 1) FY 2022 enacted and 2) 22 percent below the currently enacted level for FY 2023.

As you know, the Federal government has long played a critical role in supporting States, school districts, and postsecondary institutions in meeting the needs of students, especially underserved students and children in under-resourced communities, children with disabilities, English learners, and those experiencing homelessness. While representing but a small portion of overall education funding nationwide, Federal resources help States and school districts fill gaps in State and local support and meet critical needs for our most vulnerable students. From supporting additional staff positions and educational materials, to expanding after school programming, providing access to life-changing education and training, and helping students afford college, the Federal investment in education makes a positive difference in children's lives every day.

The Department of Education has examined several of our most significant programs to assess potential impacts resulting from 1) receiving FY 2022 funding and 2) receiving funding 22 percent below currently enacted levels:

ESEA Title I Grants to LEAs—a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would cut $850 million in funding from this program—a cut equivalent to removing more than 13,000 teachers and service providers from classrooms serving low-income children; a 22 percent reduction from the currently enacted level would cut approximately $4.0 billion in funding, impacting an estimated 25 million students and reducing program funding to its lowest level in almost a decade—a cut equivalent to removing more than 60,000 teachers and related service providers from classrooms serving low-income students.

IDEA Grants to States—a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would cut $850 million in funding from this program—a cut equivalent to removing more than 13,000 teachers and service providers from classrooms serving low-income children; a 22 percent reduction from the currently enacted level would cut more than $3.1 billion in funding, impacting an estimated 7.5 million children with disabilities and reducing Federal support to its lowest share since 1997—a cut equivalent to removing more than 48,000 teachers and related services providers from the classroom.

Title II–A (Supporting effective instruction State grants) and Title IV–A (Student support and academic enrichment grants)—a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would cut more than $35 million for these activities; a 22 percent reduction from the currently enacted level would cut more than $500 million in annual support for teachers and students, curtailing learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders, and hampering school districts' efforts to promote a well-rounded education for students in safe schools.

Pell Grants—a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would likely have a minimal effect on students and parents, while a reduction of 22 percent from currently enacted levels would likely reduce the maximum Pell award by nearly $1,000, decreasing aid to all 6.6 million Pell recipients and eliminating Pell Grants altogether for approximately 80,000 students. Cutting the discretionary funding by 22 percent without cutting the maximum award would eliminate the surplus and create a $17 billion shortfall by 2026. The program cannot function with a shortfall that large.

Administering Student Financial Aid—a reduction of 22 percent from currently enacted levels would cut $468 million in federal support to determine, disburse, and service student aid. This level of funding would have devastating effects on student and parent interactions with the Department, as well as on their ability to successfully apply for and receive student aid. However, even if funding were kept at the FY 2022 enacted level, more than 40 million student loan borrowers would be impacted through decreased service hours and longer turnaround times to make changes to student loan repayment plans, or obtain a deferment, forbearance, or discharge of student loans. More than 17 .6 million students and parents applying for student aid and calling the Department for information could experience multiple-hour wait times and reduced center hours, and student aid applicants requesting specific assistance with the FAFSA, student loan promissory notes, PLUS loan applications, or other student aid applications could see their requests take weeks longer to process. Additionally, the oversight of the more than 5,500 schools and enforcement of the Higher Education Act would suffer, putting taxpayer dollars at risk.

Federal Work-Study Program (FWS)—a reduction to the FY 2022 enacted level would provide less aid for all program recipients and eliminate FWS financial support for approximately 11,000 students; a cut of 22 percent from the currently enacted level would provide less aid for all program recipients and eliminate Work-Study financial support for approximately 85,000 students. Schools would be forced to make impossible decisions around whether to cut essential positions reliant on FWS funds or the amounts that students are able to earn under the program.

Should you have additional comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs.

Sincerely,

MIGUEL A. CARDONA, Ed.D.,
U.S. Secretary of Education.

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC, March 20, 2023.

Hon. ROSA L. DELAURO,
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE DELAURO: Thank you for your January 19, 2023 letter to the U.S. Small Business Administration (''SBA'') regarding plans by House Republican Leadership to cap Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 discretionary spending at the FY 2022 enacted level. President Biden's FY 2024 Budget lays out a detailed plan to invest in America and the small business economy, continue to lower costs for families, protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and reduce the deficit.

Strong Federal support and investments by Congress ensure that America's 33 million small businesses have the resources they need to create jobs across our nation. SBA offers access to affordable capital, training, and technical assistance to help small businesses grow and thrive. These resources have been critical especially during the surge of new-start small businesses over the past two years under the Biden Administration. Congressional Republicans have proposed unprecedented cuts in FY 2024 funding for key services and programs. While Congressional Republicans haven't released a specific plan, cuts on this scale would have very real and damaging impacts on our small businesses, our communities, our economy, and our competitiveness—undermining a broad range of critical services the American people rely on in their everyday lives. That is why I share your concern that proposed budget cuts could have a negative impact on SBA's ability to deliver important services to American citizens and small businesses who rely on the SBA for guidance and support and capital.

One example of the potential impact is to the SBA's Entrepreneurial Development appropriation which funds critical programs that served 1.2 million small businesses in 2022. If Entrepreneurial Development program funding levels are capped at FY 2022 levels—a cut of $29.9 million from FY 2023 enacted funding levels—we estimate that up to 125,000 fewer entrepreneurs and small businesses would have access to free business counseling supported by SBA, including the Small Business Development Centers, that help bolster the small business economy. If Entrepreneurial Development Program funding levels were reduced by 22 percent from FY 2023 enacted, this would be a reduction of $70.4 million, which would equate to nearly 295,000 fewer small businesses being served. Either scenario would have a significant impact on the agency's ability to ensuring that undeserved communities such as Veterans, Women, and Native American entrepreneurs receive the support they deserve. We estimate that thousands of veterans and women entrepreneurs would be impacted negatively as they look to start or grow their own businesses. For instance, we would have fewer opportunities to further expand equity efforts for underserved and underrepresented small business communities, including specific reduction to support Veterans, Women, Native American entrepreneurs.

Additionally, reductions to SBA's Salaries and Expense funding would be detrimental to SBA's operations. If funding is reduced to FY 2022 enacted funding levels in FY 2024, SBA will not have sufficient funding to fully support the Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Certification program. A cut to funding in this program could significantly impact SBA's ability to certify service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. This certification is crucial to the 35,000 veterans and service-disabled veterans that compete for and provide integral services to the Federal Government.

Reverting to FY 2022 spending levels would also shrink SBA's staffing by up to 203 positions which has a direct impact on the agency's ability to deliver and oversee services for small businesses. Staff reductions will result in SBA customer service degradation in loan processing, small business outreach, training and counseling, processing government contracting, and validating small business certifications. Small businesses and resource partners will likely experience longer wait times, and SBA may become to network and cybersecurity infrastructure threats and attacks at the risk of all SBA stakeholders.

A 22 percent reduction from FY 2023 enacted levels would reduce Salaries and Expenses by nearly 385 positions, which could not be attained without a reduction in force and further reductions to services and outreach to small businesses provided across the board. This would also reduce Disaster Loan Program Administration by nearly $8 million, or over 45 positions, hurting SBA's ability to respond quickly when a disaster strikes to ensure access to capital for disaster survivors.

Finally, maintaining SBA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) funding at the FY 2022 enacted level would decrease OIG's investigative and fraud enforcement capabilities by over $25 million in FY 2024, and would undermine the SBA's OIG mission to fight fraud and abuse, including in COVID–19 relief programs. SBA is committed to combating fraud, waste, and abuse, and the taxpayers benefit greatly from the Inspector General's ongoing efforts. We need to ensure that we continue to build on that commitment.

I stand ready to provide Congress with any further information to ensure the small business owners and entrepreneurs can continue to be supported. Thank you for your partnership in helping the American people and the economy.

Sincerely,

ISABELLA CASILLAS GUZMAN,
Administrator.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, THE SECRETARY,
Washington, DC, March 17, 2023.

Hon. ROSA L. DELAURO,
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER DELAURO: Thank you for your letter requesting the impact of the proposed House Republican Leadership 2024 budget cuts on Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs and assisted families. In short, the reduced funding scenarios would represent the most devastating impacts in HUD's history.

On March 9th, President Biden released his Budget showing his plans to invest in America, continue to lower costs for families, protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and reduce the deficit. Congressional Republicans are reportedly planning unprecedented cuts in 2024 funding for key services, programs, and protections such as education, public safety, research, nutrition and more. While Congressional Republicans have not released one specific plan, cuts on this scale would have very real and damaging impacts on our families, our communities, our economy, and our competitiveness—undermining a broad range of critical services the American people rely on in their everyday lives. This letter will consider two scenarios, a reduction to 2022 enacted levels and a 22 percent reduction to 2023 enacted levels.

Most HUD programs received modest increases in 2023. Increases in the 2023 enacted budget levels relative to 2022 primarily serve to maintain existing programs, not to permit program expansions. Except for targeted funding increases for homeless assistance and tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV), almost all of HUD's programs remained at or near level funding with zero or minimal increases. Consequently, any cuts to the 2023 level do not eliminate ''extra'' funding added in 2023 but translate to direct cuts to the 2022 baseline. These cuts, in turn, would reduce existing services that families and communities rely on, including programs housing low-income families.

Today's HUD rental housing programs' funding levels are necessary to maintain existing rental assistance to keep currently assisted families in their homes. Under the 22 percent potential funding cut scenario, it would be impossible to stave off mass evictions.

IF THESE DRACONIAN CUTS WERE MADE—

THOUSANDS WOULD LOSE HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHERS

Nearly the entire increase in voucher funding between 2022 and 2023 (aside from small amounts for homeless veterans and at-risk youth) supported renewal of existing assistance to families in their current units. The dollar increase relative to 2022 was necessary to match major cost increases in the housing market. For example, between 2022 and 2023 the national population-weighted average Fair Market Rent (FMR) increased by nearly 10 percent, with 16 HUD Metro FMR Areas increasing by 20 percent or more. Rents are expected to stay high in 2024, even as growth slows down. Any cut to the 2023 funding level will not simply revert to the same number of families that could be supported in 2022, but will put large numbers of the most vulnerable and lowest income American families at risk of losing their rental assistance entirely. HUD rental assistance serves the most vulnerable low-income families, with an average income of only $15,000 per year, and includes older adults, persons with disabilities, and families with children. The Housing Choice Voucher program currently assists approximately 2.3 million families.

2022 flat—eliminates funding for 350,000 families.

22 percent cut to 2023 funding—eliminates funding for 640,000 families.

FAMILIES LIVING IN PUBLIC HOUSING WOULD BE EXPOSED TO UNSAFE LIVING CONDITIONS

The needs of public housing portfolio continue to grow, so major cuts to this program threaten to remove important affordable housing assets from the inventory. If there is a 22 percent cut, HUD calculates an expected 78 percent proration for the Operating Fund. At this level, there would be significant impacts to PHA operations. All PHAs would need to drastically cut operations, including regular property maintenance, services to families, and likely staff layoffs to right-size operations to expected revenues. Deferred maintenance would decrease housing quality, potentially exposing families to unsafe living conditions such as mold and lead-based paint. Finally, there would be the likelihood of PHA insolvency or other program failures. The projected $700 million cut from the capital grants would leave no funding to address backlog needs and $2 billion in unfunded accrual needs. Unmet capital needs mean the further deterioration of the inventory and contribute to lower occupancy rates, higher costs for utilities, less resilience to climate change, and increased health and safety risks for residents.

THERE WOULD BE AN UNPRECEDENTED LOSS OF EXISTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, LEADING TO MASS EVICTIONS

HUD's Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) program, which serves approximately 1.3 million families, needed almost $1 billion above 2022 levels to just renew the existing owner contracts for 2023. These increases are statutory and reflect increased costs, and HUD cannot avoid them within the contracts. As a result, any cuts to the 2023 level would force HUD to short fund or cancel existing contracts between the federal government and private property owners. The termination of contracts with rental owners will likely lead the owners to convert their housing to market-rate, leaving currently supported tenants in units that are now unaffordable to them, likely resulting in evictions. This would represent an historically unprecedented loss of existing affordable housing, a breach of federal contracts, and a repudiation of decades of long-term bipartisan federal investment.

2022 flat—eliminates funding for approximately 87,000 families

22 percent cut to 2023 funding—eliminates funding for approximately 286,000 families

STATES AND LOCALITIES WOULD BE PREVENTED FROM MAKING BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

In addition to rental assistance, HUD's programs also include the most popular and effective funding programs for states, cities, counties, and towns: Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships. CDBG and HOME provide flexible block grant assistance whereby funding decisions are locally controlled.

CDBG: The median CDBG annual grant is $1 million provided through a block grant allocation formula. Urban and rural municipalities and counties rely on the funding for basic housing-related infrastructure such as rehabilitation of existing affordable housing, water and sewer connections, sidewalks, as well as direct assistance for small businesses, economic development, and essential services. The estimated impact of the funding cut of 22 percent will reduce the average grant by approximately $440,000.

HOME: As with CDBG, the vital HOME Program received zero increase in 2023. Funding cuts to HOME would result in fewer new affordable rental and homeownership opportunities for low-income families, fewer grants for repair and rehabilitation of existing affordable housing, and less tenant-based rental assistance available, resulting in increased risk of homelessness. This will directly exacerbate the existing national affordable housing crisis. The estimated impact of the funding cut of 22 percent from 2023 to the average HOME formula grant of $1.5 million will reduce the average grant by $330,000 and will result in more than 6,700 fewer units of affordable housing produced.

THOUSANDS MORE AMERICANS WOULD BE SLEEPING ON THE STREETS

HUD received a targeted increase in funding for Homeless Assistance Grants in 2023, which would sustain existing resources for emergency shelter, increase availability of permanent supportive housing, and continue to provide other homeless assistance to the most vulnerable Americans. Undoing this increase will severely curtail the services that communities across the country would be able to provide to those experiencing homelessness. Cuts to the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) program from the 2023 baseline would result in less emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, and rapid rehousing. A funding cut of 22 percent would result in over 24,000 fewer people receiving assistance, likely leading to large increases in the number of people sleeping on the streets.

In the Continuum of Care and Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, funding provides permanent supportive housing for people with severe disabilities and illnesses, and rapid rehousing and transitional housing for youth and adults to help them achieve housing stability and self-sufficiency. In recent years, HUD has significantly expanded assistance to people fleeing domestic violence. Providing funding at the 2022 level for CoC renewals would result in at least 54,000 fewer homeless people and domestic violence survivors receiving assistance than in 2023, and a 22 percent cut from 2023 levels would result in nearly 95,000 fewer people receiving assistance. These cuts would eliminate new funding for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, an effort that has helped reduce the number of homeless unaccompanied youth by more than 25 percent since 2017.

DIRE HOUSING CONDITIONS IN INDIAN COUNTRY WOULD BE EXACERBATED

Housing conditions in Indian Country are among the most dire in the United States. Thus, any cuts to the 2023 formula funding level would have a significant impact on the program, which is the single largest source of funding for Indian housing assistance. It would make it almost impossible for most Tribal grantees to construct new affordable housing units and a challenge to meet the basic operations and maintenance needs of their existing housing. It would also make it extremely difficult to leverage other non-Federal resources to develop affordable housing. Funding for the formula block grant component would be reduced by $173 million with a 22-percent cut, which would reduce funding for Native American Housing Block Grants to its lowest level since it was implemented in 1996 (adjusting for inflation).

EFFORTS TO ABATE LEAD HAZARDS WOULD BE SLOWED

HUD's Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes programs to reduce lead poisoning hazards for children in lower income families, together with a variety of programs aimed at reducing indoor home health hazards. Home health hazards are scientifically proven to cause lifelong damage when ongoing exposure occurs during childhood. For example, even low levels of lead exposure during childhood have been linked with lifelong impacts on intelligence, attention, and academic achievement. Further cuts below the previous 2022 level would substantially slow and adversely affect the Federal government's planned efforts to abate lead hazards and prevent home health hazards from negatively affecting child development.

CRITICAL RESEARCH WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED

The Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R) enables the Congress, the Secretary, and other HUD principal staff to make evidence-informed decisions on budget and legislative proposals and strengthens housing and community development policy. The total investment for research, evaluation, and technical assistance was essentially level between 2022 and 2023. Thus, any cuts would substantially reduce HUD's ability to conduct research, program evaluations, and provide critical technical assistance (TA) and capacity building support, including, for example, through the Distressed Cities TA program that supports small, rural and underserved localities. A 22 percent cut to PD&R's 2023 funding would result in a $32 million cut to existing activities and investments, placing major PD&R-funded survey efforts at risk, such as the American Housing Survey, jeopardizing critical research providing the next generation of evidence on how HUD can most effectively support affordable homeownership and quality rental housing.

EFFORTS TO COMBAT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION WOULD BE SEVERELY IMPACTED

A 22 percent cut to Fair Housing Programs would severely impact the ability of the Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP) to support state and local agency enforcement of the Fair Housing Act nationwide. FHAP agencies currently investigate about 75 percent of all fair housing complaints filed under the Fair Housing Act, and this level of funding would jeopardize the FHAP agencies' ability to conduct investigations, litigate complaints, retain staff, and keep up with inflation. This level of funding would also hinder the Department's ability to admit new FHAP agencies into the program.

A 22 percent cut to the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP) would significantly impact the geographical representation of and activities performed by fair housing organizations nationally. Last year, as usual, HUD was unable to fund all Education and Outreach Initiative (EOI) qualified applicants. A reduction would further limit HUD's ability to fund organizations in underserved and unserved communities. This also could prevent HUD from maintaining the current maximum level of funding under the Private Enforcement Initiative (PEI), which funds fair housing organizations to conduct testing, investigations, and public education and outreach on the rights and responsibilities under the Fair Housing Act. Lastly, the Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST program would be severely limited in maintaining a broad scope of services, especially focused on addressing accessibility compliance in federally-assisted affordable housing programs.

HIGHLIGHTED IMPACTS ON HUD OPERATIONS

Salaries and Expenses (S&E)

If HUD's 2024 appropriation were equal to the 2022 appropriation, that would result in a reduction of $152 million from our current 2023 enacted level and require HUD to absorb a staffing reduction of over 650 full time equivalents (FTE), which would have devastating impacts on HUD services in all Program Offices. A reduction of this size would require an immediate hiring freeze and the potential for at least some furlough days, which would cause HUD services to the public to be suspended or delayed, including providing assistance to existing FHA homeowners, increasing homeownership opportunities for potential homebuyers, processing fair housing complaints and conducting complex closings of multifamily properties.

A 22 percent reduction from the 2023 enacted level would reduce S&E by $390 million and require a staffing reduction of more than 1,700 FTE. Given HUD is unable to attrit that amount of FTE during a fiscal year, it would require either implementing a Reduction in Force (RIF), incurring up to 60 furlough days, or a combination of the two, which would cause HUD services to the public to be delayed or suspended. Additionally, it would result in dramatic reductions in contractor support services to include areas such as federal protection services for building security and financial oversight and audit support services.

Information Technology (IT)

Reducing the Department's IT resources to the 2022 level represents a significant operational vulnerability. Such a reduction will have agency-wide implications on HUD operations and program administration. At this reduced funding level, the current operations and maintenance contracts will be scaled back resulting in a diminished service level for software and systems across the Department. While HUD will make every effort to keep public facing systems operational and available for external partners and the public, HUD cannot guarantee full functionality of these systems with budget reductions of this magnitude.

A 22 percent reduction in IT resources creates an extremely high level of risk to the Department's core technology infrastructure and services. At this level, a portion of HUD's existing operations and maintenance contracts will stop work due to insufficient funds. The likely impacts include prioritization of contractor support for existing major systems and cancelation of support for systems within the nonmajor portfolio. This diminished support will lead to grantee and stakeholder interruptions due to inability to access HUD grant systems and financial interfaces. Such challenges may delay state, local, and non-profit partners access to formula grant funding and rental assistance due to service disruption in relevant IT systems and contractor support. Local governments would face delays in implementing the plans that they put in place to, for example, construct affordable housing or provide support to Meals on Wheels, as they waited for HUD's systems. New homebuyers and affordable housing developers could experience delays in FHA and multifamily loan processing to service disruptions to associated systems.

All IT development will stop and existing contract support for these and any new efforts will terminate. As you can see, the proposed funding cuts would have a catastrophic impact on the ability of HUD to provide quality, affordable homes for all and to develop equitable, inclusive communities. Please do not hesitate to reach out for any additional assistance.

Sincerely,

MARCIA L. FUDGE.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, March 19, 2023.

Hon. ROSA L. DELAURO,
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER DELAURO: Thank you for your January 19, 2023, letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Secretary Mayorkas asked that I respond on his behalf.

On March 9, President Biden released his Budget for DHS that equips our Department to address the threats of today and prepare for the threats of tomorrow. The President's budget invests in programs that protect us against the threat of terrorism, strengthen the security of our borders, ensures the swift response to and recovery from natural disasters, and more.

As requested, DHS conducted an analysis of what capping FY 2024 discretionary spending at the FY 2022 enacted level would mean to the services the Department provides to the American people.

The entire Department and the critical services we provide would be impacted, including but not limited to the following:

A reduction in CBP frontline law enforcement staffing levels of up to 2,400 agents and officers;

A reduction in our Department's ability to prevent drugs from entering the country;

Cuts in federal assistance to state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners for disaster preparedness; and

Reductions in TSA personnel that would result in wait times in excess of 2 hours at large airports across the country.

The analysis in the enclosure provides additional details on just some of the significant impacts that may occur.

OPERATIONAL IMPACTS OF RETURNING TO FY 2022 FUNDING LEVELS—DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION (CBP)

Sea and Land Ports of Entry: CBP's Office of Field Operations (OFO) may need to reduce hours of service at all sea and land ports of entry (220 ports in total) and would deny landing rights at all 241 airports outside of core hours of operation based on personnel availability. With reduced hours, wait times would increase and some land ports of entry may close with commercial and private traffic still in queues, which would result in exacerbated supply chain issues potentially impacting food stuffs and American manufacturing.

Staffing: CBP may be forced to implement a hiring freeze, which would impact the agency's ability to hire the additional 300 Border Patrol Agents (BPAs) provided for in the FY 2023 budget and the 150 CBP Officers (CBPOs) and BPAs requested in the FY 2024 Budget. A hiring freeze would also result in attrition of frontline law enforcement officers by perhaps as much as 1,000 CBPOs and 1,400 BPAs.

Fentanyl Impacts:

Any impacts on CBPO staffing levels, described above, would negatively impact fentanyl seizures as well as other narcotics seizures.

Impacts could also affect the operations at ports of entry for lawful travel and goods presented for admission to the United States. Approximately 90 percent of resources at ports of entry go through these regular operations, which impact the special operations teams responsible for targeting, enforcement, and analysis. Reductions to these special operations teams will result in a reduction in targeting opioids for both inbound and outbound operations.

With limited resources, OFO would only be able to perform enhanced inspections upon primary or threshold level targets. Reducing or eliminating outbound operations will result in more money not being interdicted leaving the U.S. and enable more trafficking and deeper concealments, likely increasing the amount of fentanyl entering the country.

Air and Marine Operations: CBP's Office of Air and Marine Operations would experience 56 percent reduction in operational capabilities equating to 45,833 unexecuted aircraft hours and 11,448 boat hours. A reduction of this magnitude would result in a reduction in our operations equivalent to the following:

154,657 lbs. of cocaine not seized

859 lbs. of fentanyl and 1,948 lbs. of heroin not seized

17,148 lbs. of methamphetamine not seized

$9M in currency not seized

561 criminals not arrested, and 57,594 apprehensions not made

361 people not rescued

Trade: CBP enforces trade laws and implements measures such as penalties, suspensions, and debarment while enforcing antidumping and countervailing duties as well as forced labor laws. Decreasing the capacity of the Office of Trade would result in unprecedented gaps in defending America's economic security, resulting in revenue loss to the U.S. government and economy. Additional impacts include degradation of trade enforcement operations resulting in increased violations of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) such as the production of counterfeit goods, duty evasion through transshipment, misclassification, country of origin claims, and use of forced labor in the production of goods in U.S. supply chains.

Agriculture: Due to decreased inspectional staff and capacity, these cuts would result in increased risk of introductions of foreign animal disease, including African Swine Fever, and plant pests due to significant increases in cargo and passenger wait times.

CYBERSECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY AGENCY (CISA)

Cyber Resiliency: Budget cuts would stifle CISA's early efforts to support cyber resiliency across state, local, tribal, and territorial governments. This critical support ensures resource-poor jurisdictions (or their management service providers) are cognizant of threats and prepared to face them, and are hardening the defenses of the national critical functions under their stewardship (e.g., water supply, wastewater treatment, and emergency communications). Specifically, cyber resiliency provides support to stakeholders and mission partners in their efforts to predict, adapt, and dynamically recover from threats in high-risk areas who are significantly underserved with current resources. Without this funding, CISA will not be able to:

Design targeted assessments for highlighting cybersecurity threats and vulnerabilities to emergency communications systems nor identify mitigating actions;

Identify requirements, develop, and deliver curriculum that improves cybersecurity and interoperability in the face of evolving IP-hosted communications technology used during responses of varying size/complexity;

Design specific assessments for urban areas to evaluate and enhance cybersecurity; nor,

Expand Emergency Communications Coordinators' support to stakeholders via CISA's regional service delivery model.

In addition, the reduction of funding would eliminate the Supply Chain Risk Management (SCRM)/Federal Acquisition Security Council (FASC) program. This would impact CISA's execution of DHS's responsibility as the FASC's Information Sharing Agency (ISA) and would terminate support on the development of a doctrine required to respond to Federal Government-wide supply chain risks and planning coordination.

Cyber Protection: CISA would not have the resources to implement requirements of the Cyber Incident Reporting for Critical Infrastructure Act of 2022 (CIRCIA). CIRCIA requires CISA to develop and implement regulations requiring covered entities to report cyber incidents and ransomware payments to CISA. These reports enable CISA to rapidly deploy resources and render assistance to victims suffering attacks, analyze cross-sector trends, and quickly share information with network defenders to warn other potential victims. Implementation of this new congressional mandate will result in an exponential increase in the number of incident reports coming from critical infrastructure. If funding is held at FY 2022 levels, CISA would not have any dedicated funding to respond to this new requirement and therefore would be unable to collect and rapidly share information with critical infrastructure owners and operators.

Cyber Incident Response: CISA's Operations Center would lose the ability to ingest, triage, collate. record, and visualize information from over 50,000 cyber incidents over a one-year period. CISA would be unable to provide critical infrastructure owners and operators with analyzed reports, statistics, or trends, leading to a significant decrease in their ability to proactively avoid known and emerging threats and vulnerabilities to the nation's critical infrastructure.

State and Local Impacts: Budget cuts would lead to a 13 percent reduction in CISA's regional field forces. The regional workforce is a critical component of CISA's service delivery model. With reduced funding, CISA would have to reduce assistance provided in response to ransomware and other cyberattacks. It would also have to reduce security assessments and chemical inspections, thereby impacting businesses, healthcare providers, K–12 institutions, state and local governments, municipalities, and critical infrastructure entities. In addition, CISA would have to reduce the number of engagements and support of pre-election security assessments of polling places in communities nationwide. This would result in limiting interactions with local election officials where CISA helps to assure the security of election offices, polling places, and election infrastructure. The number of impacted jurisdictions would vary by state, as some states have tens of election jurisdictions, and some states have more than a thousand.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

FEMA grant assistance to support and help state, local, tribal, and territorial governments (SLTT) and the private sector could be reduced by half. This would negatively impact SLTT capabilities to implement preparedness strategies successfully and reduce or eliminate longterm risks to people and property from hazards and their effects.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (TSA)

Passenger Security Wait Times and Aviation Security:

In FY 2024, passenger volume is anticipated to increase by 9.2 percent over FY 2022 levels. Fewer Transportation Security Officers would increase passenger wait times from 10 minutes in FY 2023 to upwards of 30 minutes in FY 2024. At larger airports, passengers would experience wait times in excess of two hours where a steady influx of passengers makes it impossible to recover without the necessary staffing. These high wait times would also result in large crowds of unscreened people in the checkpoint queues, increasing potential soft targets.

Transportation security equipment maintenance would have to be reduced, impacting equipment reliability and increasing passenger wait times while resulting in costly actions to modify contracts.

Furloughed positions would impact transportation security now and in the future as TSA would see fewer staff at checkpoints. Additionally, TSA would have a greater gap between experienced staff and staff with minimal experience.

U.S. SECRET SERVICE (USSS)

Cyber Fraud Task Forces: Secret Service would eliminate or severely reduce the capacity of the 42 Cyber Fraud Task Forces across the country that partner with private industry, state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies and federal and state prosecutors to prevent, detect, and mitigate complex cyber-enabled financial crimes.

Cyber Forensics Training: Secret Service would shut down the National Computer Forensics Institute (NCFI) and eliminate training for state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement, prosecutors, and judges used to combat cyber threats. NCFI graduates conduct cyber forensic exams across the USSS, completing over 150,000 exams in FY 2022 that were for cases involving murder, rape, and child exploitation.

COVID–19 Fraud: Cuts would reduce the ability of Secret Service to combat COVID–19 related crime by over 50 percent. USSS is currently focused on four broad areas of COVID–19 related crime and to date has arrested over 500 criminals, recovered $1B and responded to over 5,000 investigations and inquiries.

U.S. COAST GUARD (USCG)

The United States Coast Guard would immediately cease the advancement of acquisitions, procurement, and construction resulting in a reduction to operational readiness along the maritime borders. Specifically, the inability to progress the Coast Guard's two highest acquisition priorities, the Offshore Patrol Cutter and the Polar Security Cutter, would create an operational gap and further delay of the U.S. presence in the polar regions and reduce the ability detect, deter, prevent, and disrupt terrorist attacks and other criminal acts in the U.S. maritime domain as well as our National Defense Strategy.

USDA,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, DC, March 17, 2023.

Hon. ROSA L. DELAURO,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR RANKING MEMBER DELAURO: Thank you for your letter of January 19, 2023, requesting an analysis of the impact of potential non-Defense spending cuts on the American people that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) serves. I am very concerned about the unprecedented cuts in FY 2024 funding that Congressional Republicans have proposed. While Congressional Republicans haven't released a specific plan, cuts on the scale suggested would have a very real and damaging impacts on our families, our communities, our economy, and our competitiveness—undermining a broad range of critical services the American people rely on in their everyday lives such as food and nutrition security, protection of life and property from catastrophic wildland fires, a safe food supply, and more. President Biden released a Budget on March 9th that demonstrates his commitment to invest in America, continuing to provide the critical services the American people depend on, and reducing the deficit.

USDA analyzed two possible House Republican Leadership plan scenarios. One assumes a funding level equal to that of fiscal year 2022 and while the other assumes a 22 percent reduction in funding for Government programs, which would mean a reduction of about $6.15 billion for USDA in FY 2024. A decrease of that magnitude would threaten the safety and well-being of tens of millions of Americans, raise the risk of homelessness for tens of thousands of Americans, and lead to thousands of farm families not having access to the credit and help they need to continue to farm.

The attachment provides a few examples of impacts but does not capture the entirety of the detrimental effects should the House Republicans' plan come to fruition. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss further or, if requested, provide more information in writing.

I deeply profoundly hope that Congressional leaders will reach an agreement that will does not result in these draconian reductions to USDA. I look forward to working with Congress to preserve the many priorities of rural America.

Again, thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. VILSACK,
Secretary.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL SPENDING CUTS

Bureau: Food and Nutrition Service
Program: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
Reduction Amount: Up to $1.4 billion

WIC is a federally funded nutrition assistance program with an average monthly participation currently projected to be 6.5 million in fiscal year (FY) 2024. Under both reduction scenarios (FY22 level and a 22 percent reduction), State WIC programs would have to reduce participation and establish waiting lists using the priority system provided in regulation. In the first scenario, nearly 250,000 monthly participants would not receive benefits. A 22 percent decrease would only allow the program to support about 5.07 million participants—a reduction of approximately 1,180,000 participants from the FY22 monthly average and 1,500,000 participants from current FY24 participation projections.

Since the late 1990's, the appropriations committees' bipartisan practice has been to provide enough funds for WIC to serve all eligible applicants. When funds are not sufficient to support caseload, WIC agencies implement a priority waiting list of individuals. The first to lose benefits would be non-breastfeeding postpartum women and individuals certified solely due to homelessness or migrancy, followed by children. This means some of the participants needing benefits the most would be cut off.

In addition, Nutrition Services and Administration funding provided to States would be reduced, which would hinder State agencies' ability to provide services in a timely manner and result in losses of WIC-related State and local jobs.

Bureau: Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
Program: Salaries and Expenses
Reduction Amount: Up to $250 million

Drastic changes to the FSIS' funding level would result in an across-the-board furlough of as many as 400 and 1,800 Food Safety inspectors at the FY22 and 22 percent reduction scenarios, respectively. Since, Federal law mandates inspection of meat, poultry, and egg products, approximately 6,800 establishments nationwide would experience production impacts. At the higher threshold of the cut, USDA estimates a lost production volume of more than 11.5 billion pounds of meat, an additional 11.1 billion pounds of poultry and over 590 million pounds of egg products. Together, the industry would experience a production loss of over $89 billion with a total extended loss including distribution and retail of $416 billion. Consumers would experience a shortage of meat, poultry, and egg products available for public consumption, and the shortage may result in price increases for these products. Restaurants, grocers, local merchants, and others who rely on FSIS-inspected products would suffer multiplier effects from the shortfall in production. The impact could force smaller businesses and merchants out of business. Industry workers would also be furloughed, resulting in over $2.2 billion in lost wages. The livestock industry would also incur additional costs for disruption of the pipeline from farms to production establishments as farmers and livestock producers would have to feed and store animals longer than anticipated.

The FSIS would also eliminate export inspections, resulting in losses for U.S. producers and causing additional storage costs and or loss of product. Export inspections could adversely affect other nations since the volume of products would decline. Furthermore, public food safety could be compromised by the illegal selling and distribution of uninspected meat, poultry, and egg products. Because the FSIS is also responsible for verifying the safety of imported products, cutting import inspections would result in a reduction of 1.1 billion pounds of imported meat, poultry, and egg products entering the country, in addition to the lost production capacity within the United States. Cutting import inspections might be construed as an international trade issue. Moreover, there is limited storage space along the border so unless foreign countries stopped shipments, chill/frozen storage capacity and refrigerated truck/train/ship capacity would be compromised.

Bureau: Rural Development, Rural Housing Service
Program: Rental Assistance
Reduction Amount: Up to $325 million

The Rental Assistance Program helps eligible low-income tenants, in the USDA-financed multi-family housing, pay no more than 30 percent of their incomes for rent. Approximately 288,000 tenants receive the benefit of rental assistance in almost all the apartment complexes financed by Rural Development. The House Republican leadership's planned reduction would cause between 40,000 and 63,000 current recipients to lose rental assistance. The average annual income of families and individuals receiving rental assistance (generally female-headed households, elderly, and the disabled) is approximately $12,501. These Americans are the least able to absorb any increase in the rent due to the loss of rental assistance. Loss of this rent supplement may cause property owners to increase rents, making the units unaffordable to the very low-income residents who have few options for decent, affordable housing.

With the loss of rental assistance, or higher vacancies resulting from very low-income Americans being unable to afford higher rents, many properties would be unable to pay all their operating costs. Owners may be unable to maintain the property and allow it to fall into despair, or the properties may become delinquent in their loan payments. Currently, the USDA has 160 multifamily properties in the foreclosure process, which may increase with reduction in rental assistance. Ongoing delinquencies will lead to defaults and foreclosure and may result in long-term loss of affordable housing in rural communities in future years.

Bureau: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Program: Conservation Operations
Reduction Amount: Up to $225 million

Most of the NRCS' funding is appropriated for the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) which is the agency's primary program to work with private landowners across the country through the USDA's unique delivery system of local field offices. Working one-on-one, NRCS helps producers use new technologies and implement conservation practices such as organic production systems, on farm energy management, air, soil, and water quality improvement, and enhancement of pollinator populations.

A reduction of up to $225 million would reduce Technical Assistance Support, resulting in up to 84,000 fewer producers (54 percent) receiving conservation planning assistance (impacting up to 54,000,000 acres). These reductions will have a deleterious impact on landscape-scale conservation, water quality improvements, wildlife habitat protection, open space protection, as well as natural infrastructure restoration, carbon sequestration, weather prediction capacity, plant material development and other programs and services that support extreme weather and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Funding cuts of this nature will hurt farm programs and rural America. The Administration is committed to working with Congress to improve options and better target farm programs, saving money for the Federal Government while maintaining a robust farm safety net. Program improvements can level the playing field by ensuring payments and technical assistance support the farmers and ranchers who need them most—not wealthy people, passive investors, or large and profitable agribusinesses. We can strengthen program integrity by excluding non-farmers and investors, addressing duplicative payments and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the USDA's risk management and mitigation tools.

Bureau: Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Program: Farm Loan, Salaries and Expenses, and Grant Programs
Reduction Amount: Up to $370 million

Funding cuts would drastically impact service levels currently provided by the FSA.

At the upper level of the proposed cut, there would be 5,100 fewer direct farm operating loans and 1,500 other farm loans (Emergency Loans, Guaranteed Operating Loans, Highly Fractionated Indian Land, Heirs' Property Relending Program) that could be made. The reduction of farm loan funding could result in a loss of up to 26,250 private sector jobs (plus the hundreds of farmers that would be forced out of farming and into the off-farm job market), reduce the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by more than $1.6 billion, and reduce household income by more than $1.3 billion.

Bureau: Forest Service
Program: Wildland Fire Management
Sequestration Amount: Up to $515 million for Wildland Fire Management Salaries and Expenses, and Preparedness, and Hazardous Fuels

Funding cuts under either scenario would place the United States Forest Service (USFS) wildland fire fighting mission in a decreased state of readiness and reduce agency capacity to protect life and property. At the FY22 funding level, efforts to modernize the workforce through pay reform and additional hiring will virtually stop, and the strategy for aerial wildland firefighting resource procurement and usage will need to be significantly revised. The number of firefighters, helicopters and airtankers will all need to decrease which could lead to more fires that escape initial attack and yield more large fires take weeks to contain, endanger nearby communities, damage watersheds and diminish other forest ecosystem services, and increase suppression costs. At a 22 percent reduction, 2,200–2,700 wildland firefighters would be furloughed. For both funding scenarios, fewer firefighters would also reduce performance of hazardous fuel treatments and maintenance of acres already treated, including new priority acres that are at high and very high fire risk (as high as 350,000 acres annually).

Mr. McGOVERN. These are actual numbers. These are real statistics compiled by real experts. When we talk about the fact that no one needs to worry about what is being debated here, this is why we are worried.

This is the impact of what they are trying to do. What they are trying to do will hurt regular people, will hurt veterans, will hurt people who are struggling to put food on the table, will hurt teachers, will hurt the people that we represent. It will hurt children.

This is unconscionable, what is going on here. We cannot just sit by while everybody on the other side says: Oh, don't worry, be happy. It will all just work out. No, it won't.

We don't share these values of these cuts. We have a separate set of values if my friends think that it is okay to cut these programs and hurt these people.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My friend and I have had a very long day and have spent a lot of time together.

Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time is remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. SPARTZ). The gentleman from Massachusetts has 6 minutes remaining.

Mr. McGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, what we have heard on the floor today is incredible, astounding, unbelievable, unconscionable contempt for the people that we are supposed to be here to fight for.

When people tell me that both parties are the same, that both parties are equally bad or believe the same things, watch this debate and then tell me what you think.

Democrats have different values than Republicans. They have no problem racking up $2 trillion in debt when it comes to tax giveaways for Wall Street and CEOs.

Nobody on the other side is talking about having billionaires pay one cent toward reducing our deficit. Maybe that is why Speaker McCARTHY went to Wall Street to announce his plans essentially to screw Main Street.

Now they want to demand—and I say demand because this is a ransom note—demand 10 years of cuts unless we stick it to our own constituents, unless we take away food from hungry people, unless we kick people off of healthcare.

They didn't win the Senate, they didn't win the White House, and they didn't win a big majority as they wanted in the House.

To get what they want, they want to default on America so they can push through their radical MAGA agenda.

I have to be honest with you. I was disgusted by the debate in the Rules Committee last night and even what has been said here on the floor today.

This is unconscionably bad. This is not who we are. If you want to have a discussion on the debt, let's have that discussion, but this is an extortion.

You are saying if we don't agree to all these draconian cuts that are going to hurt people that we fight for every day on this side of the aisle, if we don't do that, you are going to run this economy off a cliff.

That is just an all-time high in recklessness and stupidity, Madam Speaker. We cannot accept that. The people we represent are the people who will be impacted by these cuts that I just mentioned by including in the RECORD all of the letters from the various agencies in our government. Those are our people.

Billionaires don't need us, but regular people do. People who are struggling to put food on the table are counting on us to be on their side, not to be making their life more complicated or more difficult.

Yet, this represents kind of the antithesis of everything that I believe is right. This is so wrong. It is so wrong.

I am not going to sit back and say, oh, well, let the process work its will, and maybe it won't be so bad at the end of the day.

This is bad. This is unconscionable. This is not deserving of a vote on the House floor today. People should reject it.

I urge my Republican colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Reject this. You represent these same people too. They deserve to have you on their side, not working against them.

Wall Street, they have enough support. They have enough people rooting for them to succeed. Regular people, people who are struggling in poverty, they need us. They are counting on us.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this rule, ''no'' on the previous question, and ''no'' on the underlying resolution. We have to do better than this. This is beneath the dignity of this institution.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I begin by thanking my friend for engaging, as he always does, in a spirited debate. We don't agree on a lot of things, but I admire my friend's passion and appreciate his partnership on the Rules Committee, both when I was in the minority and now that I am fortunate enough to be in the majority.

We do look at the world a little bit differently. My friend worries about a $2 trillion tax cut which, by the way, was stretched out over 10 years, much of which paid itself back in economic growth, but forgets about a single bill that spent $1.9 trillion last year that they managed to do.

Look at the results. When the President walked in pre-COVID, the economy had the lowest unemployment rate in 50 years, growing.

Even after going through that, the Biden administration walks into a V-shaped recovery and a 1.4 percent inflation rate.

In less than 2 years, they managed to flatten that out and give us the highest inflation rate in over 40 years.

How did that happen? That happened by unrestrained Democratic spending, out-of-control budget proposals by the President, a Democratic Senate, and a Democratic House that wouldn't say ''no.''

Well, those days are behind us. I understand the agony of my friends, that they actually have to sit down now and talk with the Republicans and come to agreement.

Now, we have come forward with a proposal that we think makes a lot of sense. My friend is worried about us driving up the debt.

Why are we passing an extension of the debt ceiling? That is exactly what this legislation does. We are saying we just want to talk. Here is our opening proposal.

We don't expect you will take everything or agree with everything. We know you control the United States Senate. We know the President of the United States has a veto, but you are going to talk with us, and you are not going to get a clean debt ceiling.

We are not going to give you what you can't get yourself in a Democratic United States Senate. We are going to have a real discussion about what we need to do as a country.

Now, my friend says we have different values. In some ways, we do. We have a common commitment to the institution. We have a common belief in democracy. I think we believe in civil discourse, even when we disagree.

We have many things beyond that that we agree on, but we do differ in some ways. We believe we ought to live within our means, and that is a good thing to try and do.

We think the American people ought to be able to keep more of their own money to spend on their own family and their own investments.

We are willing to put some ideas forward how to do it. We think out-of-control spending is going to make life worse.

The cruelest tax of all is inflation. My friends are worried about the poorest of the poor. I know that is sincere.

I also know the inflation that this Democratic House and Senate of 2 years ago and the administration inflicted on the American public is a curse to the poorest of the poor.

Let's sit down, find some common ground. We have done it before. We act as if it is extraordinary to actually debate around debt ceiling spending restraints.

That is the way it is normally done, particularly in divided government. That is what the American people have given us. I suspect they want us to work together.

We have done our part of the bargain. We will finish that out today. We will extend the debt ceiling, as we promised we would do.

We will put forward a series of suggestions and proposals. We think they are good. Our friends won't agree with them all, but at the end of the day, they are going to have to come to the table.

If they can't pass a clean debt ceiling—or if you can pass a clean debt ceiling in the Senate, go ahead and do it and come to the table with that, but I don't think you will be able to.

We are going to sit down and find some ways to begin to restrain this out-of-control spending, and we are going to do it because there is a Republican majority in the House that demands that we do it; that we begin to live responsibly; that we not inflict inflation on the American people; that we prioritize our spending in some reasonable and rational way.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 327 OFFERED BY MR. MCGOVERN OF MASSACHUSETTS

At the end of the resolution, add the following:

SEC. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution, the House shall proceed to the consideration in the House of the resolution (H. Res. 178) affirming the House of Representatives' commitment to protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare. The resolution shall be considered as read. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the resolution and preamble to adoption without intervening motion or demand for division of the question except one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means or their respective designees.

SEC. 4. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H. Res. 178.

Mr. COLE. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time. I urge the passage of the rule and the underlying legislation, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess for a period of less than 15 minutes.

Accordingly (at 1 o'clock and 15 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

☐ 1329

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. OWENS) at 1 o'clock and 29 minutes p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

Ordering the previous question on House Resolution 327;

Adoption of House Resolution 327, if ordered; and

The motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 1353.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, remaining electronic votes will be conducted as 5-minute votes.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2811, LIMIT, SAVE, GROW ACT OF 2023, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 39, DISAPPROVING THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE RELATING TO ''PROCEDURES COVERING SUSPENSION OF LIQUIDATION, DUTIES AND ESTIMATED DUTIES IN ACCORD WITH PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION 10414''

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 327) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2811) to provide for a responsible increase to the debt ceiling, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 39) disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Commerce relating to ''Procedures Covering Suspension of Liquidation, Duties and Estimated Duties in Accord With Presidential Proclamation 10414'', on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 218, nays 210, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 195]

YEAS—218

Aderholt	Fleischmann	Luttrell
Alford	Flood	Mace
Allen	Foxx	Malliotakis
Amodei	Franklin, C. Scott	Mann
Armstrong	Fry	Massie
Arrington	Fulcher	Mast
Babin	Gaetz	McCaul
Bacon	Gallagher	McClain
Baird	Garbarino	McClintock
Balderson	Garcia, Mike	McCormick
Banks	Gimenez	McHenry
Barr	Gonzales, Tony	Meuser
Bean (FL)	Good (VA)	Miller (IL)
Bentz	Gooden (TX)	Miller (OH)
Bergman	Gosar	Miller (WV)
Bice	Granger	Miller-Meeks
Biggs	Graves (LA)	Mills
Bilirakis	Graves (MO)	Molinaro
Bishop (NC)	Green (TN)	Moolenaar
Boebert	Greene (GA)	Mooney
Bost	Griffith	Moore (AL)
Brecheen	Grothman	Moore (UT)
Buchanan	Guest	Moran
Buck	Guthrie	Murphy
Bucshon	Hageman	Nehls
Burchett	Harris	Newhouse
Burgess	Harshbarger	Norman
Burlison	Hern	Nunn (IA)
Calvert	Higgins (LA)	Obernolte
Cammack	Hill	Ogles
Carey	Hinson	Owens
Carl	Houchin	Palmer
Carter (GA)	Hudson	Pence
Carter (TX)	Huizenga	Perry
Chavez-DeRemer	Hunt	Pfluger
Ciscomani	Issa	Posey
Cline	Jackson (TX)	Reschenthaler
Cloud	James	Rodgers (WA)
Clyde	Johnson (LA)	Rogers (AL)
Cole	Johnson (OH)	Rogers (KY)
Collins	Johnson (SD)	Rose
Comer	Jordan	Rosendale
Crane	Joyce (OH)	Rouzer
Crawford	Joyce (PA)	Roy
Crenshaw	Kean (NJ)	Rutherford
Curtis	Kelly (MS)	Salazar
D'Esposito	Kiggans (VA)	Santos
Davidson	Kiley	Scalise
De La Cruz	Kim (CA)	Schweikert
DesJarlais	Kustoff	Scott, Austin
Diaz-Balart	LaHood	Self
Donalds	LaLota	Sessions
Duarte	LaMalfa	Smith (MO)
Duncan	Lamborn	Smith (NE)
Dunn (FL)	Langworthy	Smith (NJ)
Edwards	Latta	Smucker
Ellzey	LaTurner	Spartz
Emmer	Lawler	Stauber
Ezell	Lee (FL)	Steel
Fallon	Lesko	Stefanik
Feenstra	Letlow	Steil
Ferguson	Loudermilk	Steube
Finstad	Lucas	Stewart
Fischbach	Luetkemeyer	Strong
Fitzgerald	Luna	Tenney
Fitzpatrick		Thompson (PA)